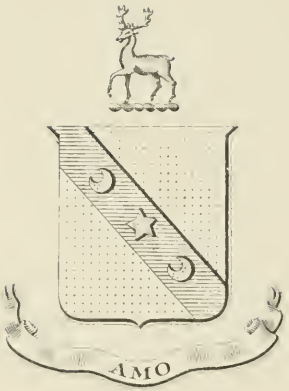

Henry Scott.

LIFE

OF

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

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SIR WALTER SCOTT

BY

ROBERT CHAMBERS, LL.D.

WITH

ABBOTSFORD NOTANDA

BY

ROBERT CARRUTHERS, LL.D.

View of Abbotsford and Scott's from the Tweed

EDITED BY W. CHAMBERS.

W. & R. CHAMBERS,
EDINBURGH AND LONDON.
1871.

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Edinburgh:
Printed by W. and R. Chambers.

PREFATORY NOTE.

THE present Memoir of Sir Walter Scott was written by my brother, the late Dr R. Chambers, immediately after the decease of the great novelist, and having been issued at a small price for popular reading, had what was then considered a large circulation—180,000 copies. It was subsequently republished, with some improvements. The Memoir is now reproduced in somewhat better style, as a small but fitting contribution in homage of the great man, the centenary of whose birth, 15th August 1871, is about to be very generally celebrated. I have taken the liberty of adding only a few paragraphs, distinguishable by being enclosed within brackets. The principal of these insertions refers to the manner in which my brother had the honour to become acquainted with, and acquired the esteem of, Sir Walter Scott.

To the Memoir are now appropriately appended certain 'Abbotsford Notanda,' descriptive of the friendly intercourse which long subsisted between Sir Walter and his factor and amanuensis, William Laidlaw, prepared by one well qualified to write on the subject, Dr R. Carruthers, Inverness.

W. C.

EDINBURGH, *June* 1871.

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LIFE

OF

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

PARENTAGE.

SIR WALTER SCOTT was one of the sons of Walter Scott, Esq., Writer to the Signet, by Anne, daughter of Dr John Rutherford, Professor of the Practice of Medicine in the University of Edinburgh.

His paternal grandfather, Mr Robert Scott, farmer at Sandyknow, in the vicinity of Smailholm Tower, in Roxburghshire, was the son of Mr Walter Scott, a younger son of Walter Scott of Raeburn, who in his turn was third son of Sir William Scott of Harden, in which family the chieftainship of the race of Scott is now understood to reside. Sir Walter's grandfather, Mr Robert Scott, farmer at Sandyknow, as we learn from the *Border Antiquities*, 'though both descended from and allied to several respectable Border families, was

chiefly distinguished for the excellent good sense and independent spirit which enabled him to lead the way in agricultural improvement—then a pursuit abandoned to persons of a very inferior description. His memory was long preserved in Teviotdale, and still survives, as that of an active and intelligent farmer, and the father of a family all of whom were distinguished by talents, probity, and remarkable success in the pursuits which they adopted.'

Walter, the third son of Sir William Scott of Harden, lived at the time of the Restoration, and embraced the tenets of Quakerism, which at that period made their way into Scotland. For this he endured a degree of persecution for which it is now difficult to assign a reason. The Scottish Privy-council, by an edict dated June 20, 1665, directed his brother, the existing representative of the Harden family, to take away his three children, and educate them separately, so that they might not become infected with the same heresy; and, for doing so, he was to be entitled to sue his brother for the maintenance of the children. By a second edict, dated July 5, 1666, the Council directed two thousand pounds Scots money to be paid by the Laird of Raeburn for this purpose; and, as he was now confined in the Tolbooth of Edinburgh, where he was liable to be further tainted by converse with others of the same sect there also imprisoned, the Council further ordered him to be transported to the jail of Jedburgh, where no one was to have access to him but such as might be expected to convert him from his present principles.

Walter, the second son of this gentleman, and father to the novelist's grandfather, received a good education

at Glasgow College, under the protection of his uncle. He was a zealous Jacobite—a friend and correspondent of Dr Pitcairn—and made a vow never to shave his beard till the exiled House of Stuart should be restored; whence he acquired the name of *Beardie.*

Dr John Rutherford, maternal grandfather to the subject of this memoir, was one of four Scottish pupils of Boerhaave, who, in the early part of the last century, contributed to establish the high character of the Edinburgh University as a school of medicine. He was the first Professor of the Practice of Physic in the university, to which office he was elected in 1727, and which he resigned in 1766, in favour of the celebrated Dr John Gregory. He was also the first person who delivered lectures on Clinical Medicine in the Infirmary. His son, Dr Daniel Rutherford, maternal uncle to the novelist, was afterwards, for a long period, Professor of Botany in the Edinburgh University, and further distinguished by his great proficiency in chemistry. Dr D. Rutherford was one of the cleverest scientific men of his day; and, but for certain unimportant circumstances, would have been preferred to the high honour of succeeding Black in the chair of Chemistry. When he took his degree in 1772, Pneumatic Chemistry was in its infancy. Upon this occasion he published a thesis, in which the doctrines respecting gaseous bodies are laid down with great perspicuity, as far as they were then known, and an account also given of a series of experiments made by himself, which discover much ingenuity and address. He was the first European chemist who, if the expression may be used, *discovered* nitrogen. Had he proceeded a single step farther, he would have anticipated the discoveries of Priestley,

Scheele, and Lavoisier, respecting oxygen, which have rendered their names immortal. As it was, the experiments and discoveries of Dr Rutherford made his name respected all over Europe.

The wife of Dr John Rutherford, and maternal grandmother of Sir Walter Scott, was Jean Swinton, daughter of Swinton of Swinton, in Berwickshire, one of the oldest families in Scotland, and at one period very powerful. Sir Walter has introduced a chivalric representative of this race into his drama of *Halidon Hill.* The grandfather of Jean Swinton was Sir John Swinton, the twentieth baron in lineal descent, and the son of the celebrated Judge Swinton, to whom, along with Sir William Lockhart of Lee, Cromwell intrusted the chief management of civil affairs in Scotland during his usurpation. Lord Swinton, as he was called, in virtue of his judicial character, was seized, after the Restoration, and brought down to Scotland for trial, in the same vessel with the Marquis of Argyll. It was generally expected that one who had played so conspicuous a part in the late usurpation, would not elude the vengeance of the new government. He escaped, however, by suddenly adopting the tenets of the society to which Walter Scott of Raeburn afterwards attached himself. On being brought before the parliament for trial, he rejected all means of legal defence; and his simply penitent appearance and venerable aspect wrought so far with his judges, that he was acquitted, while less obnoxious men were condemned. It was from this extraordinary person, and while confined along with him in Edinburgh Castle, that Colonel David Barclay, father of Robert Barclay, the eminent author of the *Apology for the Quakers*, contracted those sentiments

which afterwards shone forth with such remarkable lustre in his son.

While the ancestry of Sir Walter Scott is thus shewn to have been somewhat more than respectable, it must be also stated, that, in his character as a man, a citizen, or a professional agent, there could not be a more worthy member of society than his immediate parent. Mr Walter Scott, born in 1729, and admitted as a Writer to the Signet in 1755, was by no means a man of shining abilities. He was, however, a steady, expert man of business, insomuch as to prosper considerably in life; and nothing could exceed the gentleness, sincerity, and benevolence of his character. For many years, he held the honourable office of an elder in the parish church of Old Greyfriars, while Dr Robertson, the historian of *America* and *Charles V.*, acted as one of the ministers. The other clergyman was Dr John Erskine, much more distinguished as a divine, and of whom Sir Walter has given an animated picture in his novel of *Guy Mannering*. The latter person led the more zealous party of the Church of Scotland, in opposition to his colleague, Dr Robertson, who swayed the moderate and predominating party; and it is believed that, although a Jacobite, and employed mostly by that party, the religious impressions of Mr Scott were more akin to the doctrines maintained by Erskine, than those professed by Robertson.

Mrs Scott, while she boasted a less prepossessing exterior than her husband, was enabled, partly by the more literary character of her connections and education, and more perhaps by native powers of intellect, to make a greater impression in conversation. It has thus become a conceded point, that Sir Walter derived

his abilities almost exclusively from this parent. Without pretending to judge in a matter of such delicacy, it may at least be allowed that the young poet was at first greatly indebted to his mother for an introduction to the literary society of which her father and brother were such distinguished ornaments. It has somewhere been alleged that Mrs Scott, who was an intimate friend of Allan Ramsay, Blacklock, and other poetical wits of the last century, wrote verses, like them, in the vernacular language of Scotland. But this can be denied, upon the testimony of her own son. The mistake has probably arisen in consequence of a Mrs Scott of Wauchope, whose maiden name was likewise Rutherford, having published poetry of her own composition. Mrs Walter Scott, who was altogether a woman of the highest order of intellect and character, was, at an early age, deemed worthy by her father to be intrusted with the charge of his house, during his temporary widowhood; and thus she possessed opportunities enjoyed by few young ladies of her own age, and of the period when she lived, of mixing in literary society. It is unquestionable that this circumstance was likely to have some effect in later life upon her son, with the training of whose mind she must, in virtue of her maternal character, have had more to do than her husband. It may be further mentioned that Mrs Scott had been principally educated by a reduced gentlewoman, a Mrs Euphemia Sinclair (grand-daughter of Sir Robert Sinclair of Longformacus), who kept a school for young ladies in the now wretched precincts of Blackfriars' Wynd, in Edinburgh, and who had the honour of educating many of the female nobility and gentry of Scotland, some of whom were her own

relations. Sir Walter's own words respecting this person are given in the work entitled *Traditions of Edinburgh:* 'To judge by the proficiency of her scholars, although much of what is called accomplishment might then be left untaught, she must have been possessed of uncommon talents for education; for all the ladies above mentioned' [the list includes Mrs Scott] 'had well-cultivated minds, were fond of reading, wrote and spelled admirably, were well acquainted with history and with the belles-lettres, without neglecting the more homely duties of the needle and accompt-book; and, while two of them' [meaning, as there is reason to believe, Mrs Scott, and Mrs Murray Keith, the Mrs Bethune Baliol of the *Chronicles of the Canongate*] 'were women of extraordinary talents, all of them were perfectly well bred in society.' Sir Walter further communicated that his mother, and many others of Mrs Sinclair's pupils, were sent, according to a fashion then prevalent in good society, to be *finished off* by the Honourable Mrs Ogilvie, lady of the Honourable Patrick Ogilvie of Longmay, whose brother, the Earl of Seafield, was so instrumental, as Chancellor of Scotland, in carrying through the union with England. Mrs Ogilvie trained her young friends to a style of manners which would now be considered intolerably stiff; for instance, no young lady, in sitting, was permitted ever to touch the back of her chair. Such was the effect of this early training upon the mind of Mrs Scott, that even when she approached her eightieth year, she took as much care to avoid touching her chair with her back as if she had still been under the stern eye of Mrs Ogilvie.

BIRTH—BIRTHPLACE—EARLY SCENES.

Sir Walter Scott was born at Edinburgh on the 15th of August 1771, being the birthday of the great European hero [Napoleon] whose deeds he was afterwards to record. He was the third of a family consisting of six sons and one daughter. The eldest son, John, attained to a captaincy in an infantry regiment, but was early obliged to retire from service on account of the delicate state of his health. Another elder brother, Daniel, was a sailor, but died in early life. Of him Sir Walter has often been heard to assert, that he was by far the cleverest and most interesting of the whole. Thomas, the next brother to Sir Walter, followed the father's profession, and was for some years factor to the Marquis of Abercorn, but eventually died in Canada in 1822, in the capacity of paymaster to the 70th Regiment. Sir Walter himself entertained a fondly high opinion of the talents of this brother; but it is not borne out by the sense of his other friends. He possessed, however, some burlesque humour, and an acquaintance with Scottish manners and character—qualities which were apt to impose a little, and even induced some individuals to believe, for some time, that he, rather than his more gifted brother, was the author of 'The Novels.'

Existence opened upon the author of *Waverley* in one of the duskiest parts of the ancient capital, which he has been pleased to apostrophise in *Marmion* as his 'own romantic town.' At the time of his birth, and for some time after, his father lived at the head of the College Wynd, a narrow alley leading from the Cowgate to the gate of the college. The two lower flats of the house were occupied by Mr Keith, W.S., grandfather of the

Knight Marischal of Scotland, and Mr Walter Scott lodged on the third floor, his part of the mansion being accessible by a stair behind.

It was a house of what would now be considered humble aspect, but at that time neither humble from its individual appearance nor from its vicinage. As it stood on the line necessary for the opening of a street along the north skirt of the new university buildings, it was destroyed on that occasion, and never rebuilt. Speaking of this house in a series of notes communicated to a local antiquary in 1825, Sir Walter said: 'It consisted of two flats above Mr Keith's, and belonged to my father, Mr Walter Scott, Writer to the Signet; there I had the chance to be born, 15th August 1771. My father, soon after my birth, removed to George's Square, and let the house in the College Wynd, first to Mr Dundas of Philipstoun, and afterwards to Mr William Keith, father of Sir Alexander Keith. It was purchased by the public, together with Mr Keith's' [the inferior floors], 'and pulled down to make way for the new college.'

It appears, however, that, before Sir Walter could receive any impressions from the romantic scenery of the Old Town of Edinburgh, he was removed, on account of the delicacy of his health, to the country, and lived for a considerable period under the charge of his paternal grandfather at Sandyknow. This farm is situated upon high ground, near the bottom of Leader Water, and overlooks a large part of the vale of Tweed. In the immediate neighbourhood of the farm-house, upon a rocky foundation, stood the Border fortlet called Smailholm Tower, which possessed many features to attract the attention of the young poet. It was his

early residence at this romantic spot that imparted an intense affection for the southern part of Scotland, to which he finally adjourned. Some account of the district which he so dearly loved may here properly be given.

THE LAND OF SCOTT.

The district which this mighty genius has appropriated as his own, may be described as restricted in a great measure to the counties of Roxburgh and Selkirk, the former of which is the central part of the frontier or Border of Scotland, noted of old for the warlike character of its inhabitants, and even, till a comparatively late period, for certain predatory habits, unlike anything that obtained at the same time, at least in the southern portion of Scotland. Though born in Edinburgh, Walter Scott was descended from Roxburghshire families, and was familiar in his early years with both the scenery and the inhabitants, and the history and traditions, of that romantic land. He was indeed fed with the legendary lore of the Borders as with a mother's milk; and it was this, no doubt, which gave his mind so remarkable a taste for the manners of the middle ages, to the exclusion of all sympathy for either the ideas of the ancient classics, or the literature of modern manners. There was something additionally engaging to a mind like his in the poetical associations which have so long rendered this region the very Arcadia of Scotland. The Tweed, flowing majestically from one end of it to the other; the Teviot, a scarcely less noble tributary; with all the lesser streams connected with these two—the Jed, the Gala, the Ettrick, the Yarrow, and the Quair—had, from the revival of Scottish poetry, been sung by

unnumbered bards, many of whose names have perished, like flowers, from the face of the earth which they adorned. From all these associations mingled together, did the mind of this transcendent genius draw its first and its happiest inspiration.

The general character of this district of Scotland is pastoral. Here and there, along the banks of the streams, there are alluvial strips called *haughs*, all of which are finely cultivated; and the plough, in many places, has ascended the hill to a considerable height; but the land in general is a succession of pastoral eminences, which are either green to the top, or swathed in dusky heath, unless where a patch of young and green wood seeks to soften the climate and the soil. Much of the land still belongs to the Duke of Buccleuch, and other descendants of noted Border chiefs, and it annually supplies much of what both clothes and feeds the British population. Being little intruded upon by manufactures, or any other thing calculated to introduce new ideas, its population exhibit, in general, those primitive features of character which are so invariably found to characterise a pastoral people. Even where, in such cases as Hawick and Galashiels, manufactures have established an isolated seat, the people are hardly distinguishable, in simplicity and homely virtues, from the tenants of the hills.

Starting at Kelso upon an excursion over this country, the traveller would soon reach Roxburgh, where the Teviot and the Tweed are joined—a place noted in early Scottish history for the importance of its town and castle, now alike swept away. Pursuing upwards the course of the Teviot, he would first be tempted aside into the sylvan valley of the Jed, on the banks

of which stands the ancient and picturesque town of Jedburgh, and whose beauties have been rapturously described by Thomson, who spent many of his youngest and happiest years amidst its beautiful *braes*. Farther up, the Teviot is joined by the Aill, and, farther up still, by the Rule, a rivulet whose banks were once occupied almost exclusively by the warlike clans of Turnbull and Rutherford. Next is the Slitrig, and next the Borthwick; after which, the accessories of this mountain stream cease to be distinguished. Every stream has its valley; every valley has its particular class of inhabitants—its own tales, songs, and traditions; and when the traveller contrasts its noble hills and clear trotting *burnies* with the tame landscapes of 'merry England,' he is at no loss to see how the natives of a mountainous region come to distinguish their own country so much in poetical recollection, and behold it with such exclusive love. When the Englishman is absent from his home, he sees a scene not greatly different from what he is accustomed to, and regards his absence with very little feeling. But when a native of these secluded vales visits another district, he finds an alien peculiarity in every object; the hills are of a different height and vesture; the streams are different in size, or run in a different direction. Everything tells him that he is not at home. And, when returning to his own glen, how every distant hill-top comes out to his sight as a familiar and companionable object! How every less prominent feature reminds him of that place which, of all the earth, he calls *his own!* Even when he crosses what is termed the height of the country, and but sees the waters running *towards* that cherished place, his heart is distended with a sense of home and kindred, and he throws his

very soul upon the stream, that it may be carried before him to the spot where he has garnered up all his most valued affections.

There is one part of Roxburghshire which does not belong to the great vale of the Tweed, and yet is as essentially as any a part of the Land of Scott. This is Liddesdale, or the vale of the Liddel, a stream which seeks the Solway, and forms part of the more westerly border. Nothing out of Spain could be more wild or lonely than this pastoral vale, which once harboured the predatory clans of Elliot and Armstrong, but is now occupied by a race of more than usually primitive sheep-farmers. It is absolutely overrun with song and legend, of which Sir Walter Scott reaped an ample harvest for his *Border Minstrelsy*, including the fine old ballads of *Dick o' the Cow* and *Jock o' the Syde.*

It may be said, indeed, that, of all places in the south of Scotland, the attention of the great novelist was first fixed upon Liddesdale. In his second literary effort —the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*—he confined himself in a great measure to Teviotdale, in the upper part of which, about three miles above Hawick, stands Branxholm Castle, the chief scene of the poem. The old house has been much altered since the supposed era of the *Lay;* but it has nevertheless more of an ancient than a modern appearance, and does not much disappoint a modern beholder. For a long time, the Buccleuch family have left it to the occupancy of the individuals who act as their agents or chamberlains on this part of their extensive property; and it is at present kept in the best order, and surrounded by some fine woods of ancient and modern growth. Seated on a lofty bank, it still overlooks that stream, and is

overtopped by those hills, to which, it will be recollected, 'the lady' successively addressed her witching incantations.

The small vale of Borthwick Water, which starts off from the strath of the Teviot a little above Hawick, contains a scene which cannot well be overlooked—namely, Harden Castle, the original though now deserted seat of the family of Scott of Harden, from which, through the Raeburn branch, Sir Walter Scott was descended. This, though neglected alike by its proprietor and by tourists, is one of the most remarkable pieces of scenery which we, who have travelled over nearly the whole of Scotland, have yet seen within its shores. Conceive, first, the lonely pastoral beauty of the vale of Borthwick; next, a minor vale receding from its northern side, full of old and emaciated, but still beautiful wood: penetrating this recess for a little way, the traveller sees, perched upon a lofty height in front, and beaming perhaps in the sun, a house which, though not picturesque in its outline, derives that quality in a high degree from its situation and accompaniments. This is Harden House or Castle; but, though apparently near it, the wayfarer has yet to walk a long way around the height before he can wind his way into its immediate presence. When arrived at the platform whereon the house stands, he finds it degraded into a farm-house; its court forming perhaps a temporary cattle-yard; every ornament disgraced; every memorial of former grandeur seen through a slough of plebeian utility and homeliness, or broken into ruin. A pavement of black and white diced marble is found in the vestibule, every square of which is bruised to pieces, and the whole strewed with the details of a dairy. The dining-room, a large apartment

with a richly ornamented stucco roof, is now used as the farmer's kitchen. Other parts of the house, still bearing the arms and initials of Walter Scott, Earl of Tarras, great-grandfather of the late Mr Scott of Harden, and of his second wife, Helen Hepburn, are sunk in a scarcely less proportion. This nobleman was at first married to Mary, Countess of Buccleuch, who died, however, without issue, leaving the succession open to her sister Anne, who became the wife of the unfortunate Duke of Monmouth, eldest natural son of Charles II. Through this family connection, the Earl of Tarras was induced to join in the conspiracy which usually bears the name of the Rye-house Plot, for which he was attainted, only saving his life by giving evidence against his more steadfast companion, Baillie of Jerviswood, the great-grandfather of another Scottish proprietor, who happened to be an immediate neighbour of Harden. It may be asked why Mr Scott did not inherit the title of his ancestor: the answer is, that it was only thought necessary to invest the husband of the Countess of Buccleuch with a title for his own life—which proves that the hereditary character of the peerage has not always been observed in our constitution. While all of this scene that springs from art is degraded and wretched, it is striking to see that its natural grandeur suffers no defalcation. The wide-sweeping hills stretch off grandly on all hands, and the celebrated *den*, from which the place has taken its name, still retains the features which have rendered it so remarkable a natural curiosity. This is a large abyss in the earth, as it may be called, immediately under the walls of the house, and altogether unpervaded by running water—the banks clothed with trees of all kinds, and one side opening to the vale,

though the bottom is much beneath the level of the surrounding ground. Old Wat of Harden—such is the popular name of an aged marauder celebrated in the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*—used to keep the large herds which he had draughted out of the northern counties of England in this strange hollow; and it seems to have been admirably adapted for the purpose. It was this Border hero of whom the story is told somewhere by his illustrious descendant, that, coming once homeward with a goodly prey of cattle, and seeing a large haystack standing in a farm-yard by the way, he could not help saying, with some bitterness: 'By my saul, an ye had four feet, ye should gang too!'

SCHOOL-BOY DAYS.

It is understood that, at the 'evening fire' of Sandyknow, Sir Walter learned much of that Border lore which he afterwards wrought up in his fictions. To what extent his residence there retarded his progress in school instruction, is not discovered. After being at Sandyknow, he was, for the sake of the mineral waters, sent, in his fourth year, to Bath, where he attended a dame's school, and received his first lessons in reading. Returning to Edinburgh, he made some advances in the rudiments of learning at a private school kept by a Mr Leechman in Hamilton's Entry, Bristo Street [now a small, decayed building, with a tiled roof, occupied by a working blacksmith]. This was his first school in Edinburgh. It is almost certain that his attendance at school was rendered irregular by his delicate health. He entered Fraser's class at the High School in the *third year*—that is to

say, when that master had carried his class through one half of the ordinary curriculum of the school; wherefore it is clear that any earlier instruction he could have received must have been in some inferior institution, and very probably communicated in a hurried and imperfect manner. It is at the commencement of the school year in October 1779 that his name first appears in the school register: he must have then been eight years of age, which, it may be remarked, is an unusually early period for a boy to enter the third year of his classical course. What is further remarkable, his elder brother attended the same class. It is therefore to be suspected that his educational interests were sacrificed, in some measure, to the circumstances of the school, which were at that period in such an unhappy arrangement as to teachers, that parents often precipitated their children into a class for which they were unfitted, in order to escape a teacher whom they deemed unqualified for his duties, and secure the instructions of one who bore a superior character.

Although Mr Luke Fraser was one of the severest flagellators even of the *old school*, he enjoyed the reputation of being a sound scholar, so far as scholarship was required for his duties, and also that of a most conscientious and painstaking teacher. He first caused his scholars to get by heart Ruddiman's *Rudiments*, and as soon as they were thoroughly grounded in the declensions, the Vocabulary of the same great grammarian was put into their hands, and a small number of words prescribed to be repeated every morning. They then read in succession the *Colloquies* of Corderius, four or five lives of Cornelius

Nepos, and the first four books of Cæsar's *Commentaries*. Ere this course was perfected, the greater part of Ruddiman's *Grammatica Minora*, in Latin, was got by heart. Select passages from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the *Bucolics* and the first *Æneid* of Virgil, concluded the fourth year; after which the boys were turned over to the rector, by whom they were instructed for two years more; making the course in all six years. It must also be understood, that every one of the three masters besides Mr Fraser pursued the same system, bringing forward a class from the first elements to the state in which it was fitted for the attention of the rector; after which he returned once more to take up a new set of boys in the first class—and so forth for one lustrum after another, so long as he was connected with the school. If any teacher could have brought a boy over such a difficulty as that which attended the commencement of Sir Walter's career at the High School, it would have been Mr Fraser; for few of his profession at that time were more anxious to explain away every obstruction in the path of his pupils, or took so much pains to ascertain that they were carrying the understandings of the boys along with them through all the successive stages. Apparently, however, neither the care of the master nor the inborn genius of the pupil availed much in this case, for it is said that the twenty-fifth place was no uncommon situation in the class for the future author of the Waverley Novels.

After two years of instruction, commenced under these unfavourable circumstances, Sir Walter, in October 1781, entered the rector's class, then taught by Dr Alexander Adam, the author of many excellent elementary books, and one of the most meritorious and

most eminent teachers that Scotland has ever produced. The authors read by Dr Adam's class at this period, and probably during the whole of his career, were Virgil, Horace, Cicero, Sallust, Livy, and Terence; but it was not in reading and translating alone that an education under this eminent man consisted. Adam, who was an indefatigable student, as the number and excellence of his works testify, was a complete contrast to Mr Fraser. The latter hardly ever introduced a single remark but what was intended to illustrate the *letter* of the author; whereas Dr Adam commented at great length upon whatever occurred in the course of reading in the class, whether it related to antiquities, customs, and manners, or to history. He was of so communicative a disposition, that whatever knowledge he had acquired in his private studies, he took the first opportunity of imparting to his class, paying little regard whether it was above the comprehension of the greater number of his scholars or not. He abounded in pleasant anecdote; and while he never neglected the proper business of his class, it is certain that he inspired a far higher love of knowledge and of literary history into the minds of his pupils than any other teacher of his day. At the same time, he displayed a benevolence of character which won the hearts of his pupils, and nothing ever gave him so much pleasure as to hear of their success in after-life. To this venerable person, Sir Walter was always ready to acknowledge his obligations, and it is not improbable that much of his literary character was moulded on that of Dr Adam.

As a scholar, nevertheless, the subject of this memoir never became remarkable for proficiency. There is his own authority for saying, that, even in the exercise of

metrical translation, he fell far short of some of his companions; although others preserve a somewhat different recollection, and state that this was a department in which he always manifested a superiority. It is, however, unquestionable, that in his exercises he was remarkable, to no inconsiderable extent, for blundering and incorrectness; his mind apparently not possessing that aptitude for mastering small details, in which so much of scholarship, in its earliest stages, consists.

Regarding his school-days, we may introduce an extract from an original letter on the subject. 'The following lines were written by Walter Scott when he was between ten and eleven years of age, and while he was attending the High School, Edinburgh. His master there had spoken of him as a remarkably stupid boy, and his mother with grief acknowledged that they spoke truly. She saw him one morning, in the midst of a tremendous thunder-storm, standing still in the street, and looking at the sky. She called to him repeatedly, but he remained looking upwards without taking the least notice of her. When he returned into the house, she was very much displeased with him: "Mother," he said, "I could tell you the reason why I stood still, and why I looked at the sky, if you would only give me a pencil." She gave him one, and, in less than five minutes, he laid a bit of paper on her lap, with these words written on it:

"Loud o'er my head what awful thunders roll,
What vivid lightnings flash from pole to pole,
It is thy voice, my God, that bids them fly,
Thy voice directs them through the vaulted sky;
Then let the good thy mighty power revere,
Let hardened sinners thy just judgments fear."

The old lady repeated them to me herself, and the tears were in her eyes: for I really believe, simple as they are, that she values these lines, being the first effusion of her son's genius, more than any later beauties which have so charmed all the world besides.'

Before quitting the High School, he, along with his brothers, received the advantages of some tutorial training under a Mr Mitchell, who afterwards became a minister connected with the Scotch Church. Previous to entering the university of Edinburgh, young Walter spent some time with his aunt at Kelso. Here, in order that he might be kept up in his classical studies, he attended the grammar-school, at that time under the rectorship of Mr Lancelot Whale, a worthy man and good scholar, who possessed traits of character not unlike some of those which have been depicted in Dominie Sampson. It was while thus residing for a short time at Kelso, about 1783, that Sir Walter made the acquaintance of James Ballantyne, then a schoolboy of his own age, with kindred literary tastes.

Sir Walter's education being irregular from bad health, he did not distinguish himself as a scholar, yet often surprised his instructors by the miscellaneous knowledge which he possessed, and now and then was acknowledged to display a sense of the beauties of the Latin authors such as is seldom seen in boys. In the rough amusements which went on out of school, his spirit enabled him to take a leading share, notwithstanding his lameness. He would help to man the Cowgate Port in a snow-ball match, and pass the Kittle Nine Steps on the Castle Rock with the best of them. In the winter evenings, when out-of-door exercise was not attractive, he would gather his companions round him at the fireside,

and entertain them with stories, real and imaginary, of which he seemed to have an endless store. Unluckily, his classical studies, neglected as they comparatively were, experienced an interruption from bad health, just as he was beginning to acquire some sense of their value.

It would, nevertheless, be difficult to say whether Scott was the worse or the better of the interruptions he experienced in school learning. He lost a certain kind of knowledge, it is true, but he gained another. The vacant time at his disposal he gave to general reading. History, travels, poetry, and prose fiction he devoured without discrimination, unless it were that he preferred imaginative literature to every other; and of all imaginative writers, was fondest of such as Spenser, whose knights and ladies, and dragons and giants, he was never tired of contemplating. Any passage of a favourite poet which pleased him particularly was sure to remain on his memory, and thus he was able to astonish his friends with his poetical recitations. At the same time, he admits that solidly useful matters had a poor chance of being remembered. His sober-minded parents and other friends regarded these acquirements without pride or satisfaction; they marvelled at the thirst for reading and the powers of memory, but thought it all to little good purpose, and only excused it in consideration of the infirm health of the young prodigy. Scott himself lived to lament the indifference he shewed to that regular mental discipline which is to be acquired at school. He says in his autobiography: 'It is with the deepest regret that I recollect in my manhood the opportunities of study which I neglected in my youth; through every part of my literary career, I have

felt pinched and hampered by my own ignorance; and I would at this moment give half the reputation I have had the good-fortune to acquire, if by doing so I could rest the remaining part upon a solid foundation of learning and science.'

It is the tradition of the family—and the fact is countenanced by this propensity to tales of chivalric adventure—that Sir Walter wished at this period of his life to become a soldier. The illness, however, which had beset his early years rendered this wish bootless, even although his parents had been inclined to gratify it. His malady had had the effect of contracting his right leg, so that he could hardly walk erect, even with the toes of that foot upon the ground. It has been related by a member of his family that, on this being represented to him as an insuperable obstacle to his entering the army, he left the room in an agony of mortified feeling, and was found some time afterwards suspended by the wrists from his bedroom window, somewhat after the manner of the unfortunate Knight of the Rueful Countenance, when beguiled by the treacherous Maritornes at the inn. On being asked the cause of this strange proceeding, he said he wished to prove to them that, however unfitted by his limbs for the profession of a soldier, he was at least strong enough in the arms. He had actually remained in that uneasy and trying posture for upwards of an hour.

His parents made many efforts to cure his lameness. Edinburgh at this time boasted of an ingenious mechanist in leather, the first person who extended the use of that commodity beyond ordinary purposes; on which account there is an elaborate memoir of him in Dodsley's *Annual Register* for 1793. His name was Gavin Wilson, and,

being something of a humorist, he exhibited a sign-board intended to burlesque the vanity of his brother-tradesmen—his profession being thus indicated: 'Leather leg-maker, *not* to his Majesty.' Honest Gavin, on the application of his parents, did all he could for Sir Walter, but in vain.

An attempt was made about the same time to give him instructions in music, which used to be a branch of ordinary education in Scotland. His preceptor was Mr Alexander Campbell, then organist of an Episcopal chapel in Edinburgh, but known in later life as the editor of *Albyn's Anthology*, and author of various other publications. Mr Campbell's efforts were entirely in vain: he had to abandon his pupil in a short time, with the declaration, that he was totally deficient in that indispensable requisite to a musical education—an *ear*. It may appear strange, that he who wrote so many musical verses, should have wanted this natural gift; but there are other cases to shew that a perception of metrical quantities does not depend on any such peculiarity. Dr Johnson is a splendid instance. Throughout life, Sir Walter, however capable of enjoying music, was incapable of producing two notes consecutively that were either in tune or in time. He used to be pressed, however, at an annual agricultural dinner, to contribute his proper quota to the cantations of the evening; on which occasions he would break forth with the song of *Tarry Woo*, in a strain of unmusical vehemence, which never failed, on the same principle as Dick Tinto's ill-painted sign, to put the company into good-humour.

UNIVERSITY.

Sir Walter was placed in the University of Edinburgh, October 1783. The usual course at this famed seminary is, for the first year, to attend the classes of Latin and Greek, to which, during the second, are added Mathematics and Logic; the third and last year of the course of a merely liberal education is spent in attending the lectures on Moral and Natural Philosophy. It would appear that Sir Walter did not proceed regularly through this academical course. He was matriculated, or booked, in 1783, at once for the Humanity or Latin class under Professor Hill, and the Greek class under Professor Dalyell; and for the latter, once more in 1784. But the only other class for which he seems to have matriculated at the college was that of Logic, under Professor Bruce, in 1785. Although he may perhaps have attended other classes without matriculation, there is reason to believe that his irregular health produced a corresponding irregularity in his academical studies. The result, it is to be feared, was, that he entered life much in the condition of his illustrious prototype, the Bard of Avon—that is, 'with a little Latin and less Greek.'

Between his twelfth and fifteenth year, young Scott had a particularly favourite companion of his own age, John Irvine, the mutual attraction being a love of fictions of a chivalrous description, furnished by an eminent circulating library, which had been founded in Edinburgh by Allan Ramsay, and situated in the High Street, a short way above the Tron Church, and then belonged to Mr James Sibbald, a person of literary tastes, who edited the *Edinburgh Magazine*, and a

collection of Scottish poetry. This old-fashioned library, the first of its kind, passed in time into the hands of Mr Alexander Mackay; and was finally sold off in 1831. With a volume from this precious repository, the two youths sometimes adjourned to the picturesque sides of Arthur's Seat, where, seated together so as to read from the same page, they revelled in the adventures of heroes and heroines of romance.

It will thus be observed that Sir Walter's acquirements in his early years did not lie nearly so much in ordinary branches of education, as in a large stock of miscellaneous reading, taken up at the dictation of his own taste. His thirst for reading is perhaps not described in sufficiently emphatic terms, even in the above narrative. It amounted to an enthusiasm. He was at that time very much in the house of his uncle, Dr Rutherford, at foot of Hyndford's Close, near the Netherbow, and there, even at breakfast, he would constantly have a book open by his side, to refer to while sipping his coffee, like his own Oldbuck in the *Antiquary*. His uncle frequently commanded him to lay aside his book while eating, and Sir Walter would only ask permission first to read out the paragraph in which he was engaged. But no sooner was one paragraph ended than another was begun, so that the doctor never could find that his nephew finished a paragraph in his life. It may be mentioned that Shakspeare was at this period frequently in his hands, and that, of all the plays, the *Merchant of Venice* was his principal favourite.

Another choice companion at this period was young Adam Ferguson—afterwards known as Sir Adam Ferguson—son of Dr Adam Ferguson, author of the *History of the Roman Republic*, and who remained an

intimate friend during life. The house of Dr Ferguson was a villa situated on the east side of a southern suburb of Edinburgh, called *The Sciennes*, from its proximity to the remains of an ancient monastery, dedicated to St Catherine of Sienna. Dr Ferguson's house is remarkable as that in which young Walter Scott had an opportunity of being in the company of Robert Burns. Scott had read Burns's poetry, and he ardently desired to see the poet. An opportunity was at length furnished, when Burns, on visiting Edinburgh in 1787, came by invitation to the residence of Dr Ferguson. Of the meeting, Scott has communicated an unaffected description to Mr Lockhart. Sir Adam Ferguson favoured me with some particulars of the visit of Burns to his father's house on this occasion.

It was the custom of Dr Ferguson to have a conversazione at his house in the Sciennes once a week, for his principal literary friends. Dr Dugald Stewart, on this occasion, offered to bring Burns, a proposal to which Dr Ferguson readily assented. The poet found himself amongst the most brilliant literary society which Edinburgh then afforded. Sir Adam thought that Black, Hutton, and John Home were among those present. He had himself brought his young friend Walter Scott, as yet unnoted by his seniors. Burns seemed at first little inclined to mingle easily in the company; he went about the room, looking at the pictures on the walls. The print described by Scott, from a painting by Bunbury, attracted his attention. It represented a sad picture of the effects of war: a soldier lying stretched dead on the snow, his dog sitting in misery on one side, while on the other sat his widow, nursing a child in her arms. The print was plain, yet touching;

beneath were written the following lines, which Burns read aloud:

> 'Cold on Canadian hills or Minden's plain,
> Perhaps that parent mourned her soldier slain;
> Bent o'er her babe, her eye dissolved in dew,
> The big drops mingling with the milk he drew,
> Gave the sad presage of his future years,
> The child of misery baptised in tears.'

Before getting to the end of the lines, Burns's voice faltered, and his big black eye filled with tears. A little after, he turned with much interest to the company, pointed to the picture, and, with some eagerness, asked if any one could tell him who had written these affecting lines. The philosophers were silent—no one knew; but, after a decent interval, the pale lame boy near by said in a negligent manner: 'They're written by one Langhorne.' An explanation of the place where they occur (poem of *The Country Justice*) followed, and Burns fixed a look of half-serious interest on the youth, while he said: 'You'll be a man yet, sir.' Scott may be said to have derived literary ordination from Burns. Somewhat oddly, the name Langhorne is quoted at the bottom of the lines, but in so small a character that the poet might well fail to read it.*

PROFESSION.

About his sixteenth year, Sir Walter's health experienced a sudden but most decisive change for the better. Though his lameness remained the same, his body

* This print, glazed in a black frame, was presented by Sir Adam Ferguson to my brother Robert, and it is now in my possession.—W. C.

became tall and robust, and he was thus enabled to apply himself with the necessary degree of energy to his studies for the bar. At the same time that he attended the Lectures of Professor Dick on Civil Law in the college, he performed the duties of a writer's apprentice under his father; that being the most approved method by which a barrister could acquire a technical knowledge of his profession, though it has never been uniformly practised.

Respect for his parents and for the common duties of life, was always a strong feeling in Scott; he therefore applied himself without a murmur to the desk in his father's office, though he acknowledges that the recess beneath was generally stuffed with his favourite books, from which, at intervals, he would 'snatch a fearful joy.' He even made his diligence in copying law-papers a means of gratifying his intellectual passions, often writing an unusual quantity, that with the result he might purchase some book or object of virtù which he wished to possess. It should be mentioned that the little room assigned to him on the kitchen-floor of his father's house in George Square was already made a kind of museum by his taste for curiosities, especially those of an antiquarian nature. He never was heard to grudge the years he had spent in his father's painstaking business; on the contrary, he recollected them with pleasure, for it was always a matter of pride with him to be a man of business as well as a man of letters. The discipline of the office gave him a number of little technical habits, which he never afterwards lost. He was, for instance, much of a formalist in the folding and disposal of papers. The writer of this narrative recollects folding a paper in a wrong fashion in his presence,

when he instantly undid it, and shewed, with a schoolmasterlike nicety, but with great good-humour, the proper way to perform this little piece of business.

While advancing to manhood, and during its first few years, Scott, besides keeping up his desultory system of reading, attended the meetings of a literary society composed of such youths as himself. A selection of these and of his early schoolfellows, became his ordinary companions. Amongst them was William Clerk, son of Mr Clerk of Eldin, and afterwards a distinguished member of the Scottish bar. It was the pleasure of this group of young men to take frequent rambles in the country, visiting any ancient castle or other remarkable object within their reach. Scott, notwithstanding his limp, walked as stoutly, and sustained fatigue as well, as any of them. Sometimes they would, according to the general habits of those days, resort to taverns for oysters and punch. Scott entered into such indulgences without losing self-control; but he lived to think this ill-spent time. As to other follies equally besetting to youth, it is admitted by all his early friends that he was in a singular degree pure and blameless. His genial good-humour made him a favourite with his young friends, and they could not deny his possessing much out-of-the-way knowledge; yet it does not appear that they saw in him any intellectual superiority, or reason to expect the brilliant destiny which awaited him. The tendency of all testimony from those who knew him at this time is rather to set him down as one from whom nothing extraordinary was to be looked for in mature manhood.

We can easily see the grounds of this opinion. Scott had not been a good scholar. He shewed none of the

peculiarities of the young sonneteer, for poetry was not yet developed in his nature. Any advantage he possessed over others of his own standing lay in a kind of learning which seemed useless. It is not, then, surprising that he ranked only with ordinary youths, or perhaps a little below them. It is asserted, however, by James Ballantyne, that there was a certain firmness of understanding in Scott, which enabled him to acquire an ascendency over some of his companions; giving him the power of allaying their quarrels by a few words, and disposing them to submit to him on many other occasions. Still, this must have looked like a quality of the common world, and especially unconnected with literary genius.

When Scott's apprenticeship expired, the father was willing to introduce him at once into a business which would have yielded a tolerable income; but the youth, stirred by ambition, preferred advancing to the bar, for which his service in a writer's office was the reverse of a disqualification. Having therefore passed through the usual studies, he was admitted of the Faculty of Advocates, July 1792. This is a profession in which a young man usually spends a few years to little purpose, unless peculiar advantages in the way of patronage help him on. Scott does not appear to have done more for some sessions than pass creditably enough through certain routine duties which his father and others imposed upon him, and for which only moderate remuneration was made. He wanted the ready fluent address which is required for pleading, and his knowledge of law was not such as to attract business to him as a consulting counsel. While lingering out the first few idle years of professional life, he studied

the German language and some of its modern writers. He also continued the same kind of antiquarian reading for which he had already become remarkable.

Amongst other things giving a character to his mind, were certain annual journeys he made into the pastoral district of Liddesdale, where the castles of the old Border chiefs, and the legends of their exploits, were still rife. On these occasions, he was accompanied by an intelligent friend, Mr Robert Shortreed, long after sheriff-substitute at Jedburgh. No inns, and hardly any roads, were then in Liddesdale. The farmers were a simple race, knowing nothing of the outward world. So much was this the case, that one honest fellow, at whose house the travellers alighted to spend a night, was actually frightened at the idea of meeting an Edinburgh advocate. Willie o' Milburn, as this hero was called, at length took a careful survey of Scott round a corner of the stable, and getting somewhat reassured from the sight, said to Mr Shortreed: 'Weel, de'il ha'e me if I's be a bit feared for him now; he 's just a chield like ourselves, I think.' On these excursions, Scott took down from old people anecdotes of the old rough times, and copies of the ballads in which the adventures of the Elliots and Armstrongs were recorded. Thus were laid the foundations of the collection which became in time the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. The friendship of Mr Edmonstone of Newton led him, in like manner, to visit those districts of Stirlingshire and lower Perthshire where he afterwards localised his *Lady of the Lake*. There he learned much of the more recent rough times of the Highlands, and even conversed with one gentleman who had had to do with Rob Roy. These things constituted the real

education of Scott's mind, as far as his character as a literary man is concerned.

POLITICAL OPINIONS—SOLDIERING.

From his earliest years, Sir Walter's political leanings were towards Conservatism, or that principle which disposes men to wish for the preservation of existing institutions, and the continuance of power in the hands which have heretofore possessed it. 'As for politics,' says Shenstone in his Letters, 'I think poets are Tories by nature, supposing them to be by nature poets. The love of an individual person or family that has worn a crown for many successions, is an inclination greatly adapted to the fanciful tribe. On the other hand, mathematicians, abstract reasoners, of no manner of attachment to persons, at least to the visible part of them, but prodigiously devoted to the ideas of virtue, liberty, and so forth, are generally Whigs.' There is much in this passage that hits the particular case of Sir Walter Scott. But moods of political feeling are not confined to individuals—they sometimes become nearly general over entire nations. At the time when Sir Walter entered public life, almost all the respectable part of the community were replete with a Tory species of feeling in behalf of the British constitution, as threatened by France; and numerous bodies of volunteer militia were consequently formed, for the purpose of local defence against invasion from that country. In the beginning of the year 1797, it was judged necessary by the gentlemen of Mid-Lothian to imitate the example already set by several counties, by embodying themselves in a cavalry corps. This

association assumed the name of the Royal Mid-Lothian Regiment of Cavalry; and Mr Walter Scott had the honour to be appointed its adjutant, for which office his lameness was considered no bar, especially as he happened to be a remarkably graceful equestrian. He was a signally zealous officer, and very popular in the regiment, on account of his extreme good-humour and powers of social entertainment. His appointment partly resulted from, and partly led to, an intimacy with the most considerable man of his name, Henry, Duke of Buccleuch, who had taken a great interest in the embodying of the corps. It was also perhaps the means, to a certain extent, of making him known to Mr Henry Dundas, who was now one of His Majesty's Secretaries of State, and a lively promoter of the scheme of national defence in Scotland. Adjutant Scott composed a war-song, as he called it, for the Mid-Lothian Cavalry, which he afterwards published in the *Border Minstrelsy*. It is an animated poem, and might, as a person is *now* apt to suppose, have commanded attention, by whomsoever written, or wherever presented to notice. Yet, to shew how apt men are to judge of literary compositions upon general principles, and not with a direct reference to the particular merits of the article, it may be mentioned that the war-song was only a subject of ridicule to many individuals of the troop. The individual, in particular, who communicated this information, remembered a large party of the officers dining together at Musselburgh, where the chief amusement, at a certain period of the night, was to repeat the initial line, 'To horse, to horse!' with burlesque expression, and laugh at 'this attempt of Scott's' as a piece of supreme absurdity.

[VISIT TO PEEBLESSHIRE.

In the autumn of 1797, Walter Scott, accompanied by his brother John, and Adam Ferguson, made an excursion to the borders of Cumberland, taking in their way the mansion of Hallyards, in the parish of Manor, Peeblesshire, where Dr Adam Ferguson was now temporarily settled with his family. Here Scott resided for a few days, visiting Barns and other places in the neighbourhood. In a small cottage on the property of Woodhouse resided a poor and singular recluse, dwarfed and decrepit, by name David Ritchie, who was visited as one of the curiosities of the district; and it was doubtless on this occasion that Scott received those impressions which afterwards figured in the character of the 'Black Dwarf.'

Ritchie, with all his oddities, had a deep veneration for learning; and as he was told that Scott was a young advocate, he invested him with extraordinary interest. Ferguson gave an amusing account of the interview. He and his companion were accommodated with seats in the lowly and dingy hut. After grinning upon Scott for a moment with a smile less bitter than his wont, the dwarf passed to the door, double-locked it, and then, coming up to the stranger, seized him by the wrist with one of his hands, and said: 'Man, hae ye ony poo'er?' By this he meant magical power, to which he had himself some vague pretensions, or which, at least, he had studied and reflected upon till it had become with him a kind of monomania. Scott disavowed the possession of any gifts of this kind, evidently to the great disappointment of the inquirer, who then turned round and gave a signal to a huge black cat, hitherto

unobserved, which immediately jumped up to a shelf, where it perched itself, and seemed to the excited senses of the visitors as if it had really been the familiar spirit of the mansion. '*He* has poo'er,' said the dwarf, in a voice which made the flesh of the hearers thrill, and Scott, in particular, looked as if he conceived himself to have actually got into the den of one of those magicians with whom his studies had rendered him familiar. 'Ay, he has poo'er,' repeated the recluse, and then going to his usual seat, he sat for some minutes grinning horribly, as if enjoying the impression he had made; while not a word escaped from any of the party. Mr Ferguson at length plucked up his spirits, and called to David to open the door, as they must now be going. The dwarf slowly obeyed; and when they had got out, Mr Ferguson observed that his friend was as pale as ashes, while his person was agitated in every limb. Under such striking circumstances was this extraordinary being first presented to the *real* magician, who was afterwards to give him such a deathless celebrity.

Before quitting the district, Scott had an opportunity of visiting the old inn and posting establishment of Miss Ritchie in Peebles, then, and for ten or twelve years later, the principal place of accommodation for travellers. Miss Ritchie, an elderly lady, was somewhat of an original in manner, and there can be little doubt that her peculiarities furnished such recollections as were afterwards matured in the character of 'Meg Dods of the Cleikum Inn, St Ronans.' Proceeding southwards, the tourists at length reached Carlisle, and extended their excursion to Penrith and other places of interest in Cumberland, where an incident occurred that requires more than a casual notice.]

MARRIAGE.

Two children, a boy and girl, named Charpentier, of French parentage, fell by circumstances under the guardianship of the Marquis of Downshire. In time, the boy received a lucrative appointment in India; on his naturalisation as a British subject, changing his name to Carpenter. Miss Carpenter was placed under the charge of a governess, Miss Nicholson, and, requiring a change of scene, was, through the kindness of Lord Downshire, sent with her governess to Cumberland, where she was to live in such pleasant rural spot as might be found by the Rev. Mr Burd, Dean of Carlisle. The two ladies arrived unexpectedly, when Mrs Burd was setting out for the sake of her health to Gilsland. This was at the end of the month of August or beginning of September 1797.

Having duly arrived at Gilsland, which is situated near the borders of Scotland, they took up their residence at the inn, where, according to the custom of such places, they were placed, as the latest guests, at the bottom of the table. It chanced that three young Scottish gentlemen had arrived the same afternoon, and being also placed at the bottom of the table, one of them happened accidentally to come into close contact with the party of Mr Burd. Enough of conversation took place during dinner to let the latter individuals understand that the gentleman was a Scotchman, and this was in itself the cause of the acquaintance being protracted. Mrs Burd was intimate with a Scotch military gentleman, a Major Riddell, whose regiment was then in Scotland; and as there had been a collision between the military and the people at Tranent, on

account of the Militia Act, she was anxious to know if her friend had been among those present, or if he had received any hurt. After dinner, therefore, as they were rising from table, Mrs Burd requested her husband to ask the Scotch gentleman if he knew anything of the late riots, and particularly if a Major Riddell had been concerned in suppressing them. On these questions being put, it was found that the stranger knew Major Riddell intimately, and he was able to assure them, in very courteous terms, that his friend was quite well. From a desire to prolong the conversation on this point, the Burds invited their informant to drink tea with them in their own room, to which he very readily consented, notwithstanding that he had previously ordered his horse to be brought to the door in order to proceed upon his journey. At tea, their common acquaintance with Major Riddell furnished much pleasant conversation, and the parties became so agreeable to each other, that, in a subsequent walk to the Wells, the stranger still accompanied Mr Burd's party. He had now ordered his horse back to the stable, and talked no more of continuing his journey. It may be easily imagined that a desire of discussing the major was not *now* the sole bond of union between the parties. Mr Scott—for so he gave his name—had been impressed, during the earlier part of the evening, with the elegant and fascinating appearance of Miss Carpenter, and it was on her account that he was lingering at Gilsland. Of this young lady, it will be observed, he could have previously known nothing: she was hardly known even to the respectable persons under whose protection she appeared to be living. She was simply a lovely woman, and a young poet was struck with her charms.

Next day Mr Scott was still found at the Wells—and the next—and the next—in short, every day for a fortnight. He was as much in the company of Mr Burd and his family as the equivocal foundation of their acquaintance would allow; and by affecting an intention of speedily visiting the Lakes, he even contrived to obtain an invitation to the dean's country house in that part of England. In the course of this fortnight, the impression made upon his heart by the young Frenchwoman was gradually deepened; and it is not improbable that the effect was already in some degree reciprocal. He only tore himself away, in consequence of a call to attend certain imperative matters of business at Edinburgh.

It was not long ere he made his appearance at Mr Burd's house, where, though the dean had only contemplated a passing visit, as from a tourist, he contrived to enjoy another fortnight of Miss Carpenter's society. In order to give a plausible appearance to his intercourse with the young lady, he was perpetually talking to her in French, for the ostensible purpose of perfecting his pronunciation of that language under the instructions of one to whom it was a vernacular. Though delighted with the lively conversation of the young Scotchman, Mr and Mrs Burd could not now help feeling uneasy about his proceedings, being apprehensive as to the construction which Lord Downshire would put upon them, as well as upon their own conduct in admitting a person of whom they knew so little to the acquaintance of his ward. Miss Nicholson's sentiments were, if possible, of a still more painful kind, as, indeed, her responsibility was more onerous and delicate. In this dilemma, it was resolved by Mrs Burd to write to a

friend in Edinburgh, in order to learn something of the character and status of their guest. The answer returned was to the effect that Mr Scott was a respectable young man, and rising at the bar. It chanced at the same time that one of Mr Scott's female friends, who did not, however, entertain this respectful notion of him, hearing of some love adventure in which he had been entangled at Gilsland, wrote to this very Mrs Burd, with whom she was acquainted, inquiring if she had heard of such a thing, and 'what kind of a young lady was it, who was going to take Watty Scott?' The poet soon after found means to conciliate Lord Downshire to his views in reference to Miss Carpenter, and the marriage took place at Carlisle within four months of the first acquaintance of the parties. The match, made up under such extraordinary circumstances, was a happy one; a kind and gentle nature resided in the bosoms of both parties, and they lived accordingly in the utmost peace and amity.

Scott now commenced house-keeping in Edinburgh, where he had hitherto lived in the paternal mansion. We now see him as a young married man, spending the winter in the bosom of a frugal but elegant society in Edinburgh, and the summer months in a retired cottage on the beautiful banks of the Esk at Lasswade; cultivating, as before, literary tastes, and storing his mind with his favourite kind of learning, but not as yet conscious of his active literary powers, or thinking of aught but the duties of his profession and the claims of his little family. As an advocate, he had perhaps some little employment at the provincial sittings of the criminal court, and occasionally acted in unimportant causes as a junior counsel; but he neither obtained, nor seemed

qualified to obtain, a sufficient share of general business to insure an independence. The truth is, his mind was not yet emancipated from that enthusiastic pursuit of knowledge which had distinguished his youth. His necessities, with only himself to provide for, and a sure retreat behind him in the comfortable circumstances of his native home, were not so great as to make an exclusive application to his profession imperative; and he therefore seemed destined to join what a sarcastic barrister has termed 'the ranks of the gentlemen who are not anxious for business.' Although he could speak readily and fluently at the bar, his intellect was not at all of a forensic cast. He appeared to be too much of the abstract and unworldly scholar, to assume readily the habits of an adroit pleader; and even although he had been perfectly competent to the duties, it is a question if his external aspect and general reputation would have permitted the generality of agents to intrust them to his hands. Nevertheless, on more than one occasion, he made a considerable impression on his hearers. Once, in particular, when acting as counsel for a culprit before the High Court of Justiciary, he exerted such powers of persuasive oratory as excited the admiration of the court. It happened that there was some informality in the verdict of the jury, which at that time was always given in writing. This afforded a still more favourable opportunity for displaying his rhetorical powers than what had occurred in the course of the trial, and the sensation which he produced was long remembered by those who witnessed it. The panel, as the accused person is termed in Scotland, was acquitted.

Simple and manly in habits, good-humoured, and

averse to disputation, full of delightful information, kind and obliging to all who came near him, yet possessed of a rectitude and solidity of understanding which never allowed him to be the fool of any of his feelings, it is no wonder that Walter Scott was a general favourite, or that he attracted the regard of several persons of rank, as the Duke of Buccleuch, Lord Melville, and others. It was through the kindness of the first of these noblemen that, in 1799, he obtained the appointment of sheriff of Selkirkshire, an office of light duty, with a salary of £300 per annum. In the same year, Scott lost his father, who died in his 70th year, after a long period of suffering.

POEMS.

It was not Scott's destiny to attain distinction as a lawyer. While never neglecting his professional duties, his mind had its main bent towards literature. Having learned German, he translated and published a version of Goethe's *Goetz von Berlichingen*, a drama of such a romantic cast as harmonised entirely with his peculiar taste. He also was induced, by Mr M. G. Lewis, the well-known author of *The Monk*, to write two or three ballads on supernatural themes for a collection which was to be entitled *Tales of Wonder*. *Goetz* appeared in February 1799, but met the fate of the former publication. When the *Tales of Wonder* came out, Scott's ballads, though unfortunate in their association, obtained some praise, yet, on the whole, might also be considered as a failure. These would have been disappointments to a man who had set his heart on literary reputation. To Scott, who was at all periods of his career

humble-minded about his literary efforts, they were nothing of the kind. In this respect, he was a pattern to all authors, present and to come.

The circumstances seem to have been almost accidental which led him to make his first serious adventure in the literary world. His schoolfellow, James Ballantyne, was now settled at Kelso in the management of a weekly newspaper. Merely to give employment to his friend's types during the intervals of their ordinary use, Scott proposed to print a small collection of the old ballads which for some years he had been collecting on the Border. When the design was formed, he set about preparing the work, for which he soon obtained some assistance from Richard Heber and John Leyden—the former an Englishman of fortune, and an enthusiastic collector of books; the latter a Scottish peasant's son, who had studied for the church, and become a marvel of learning, especially in languages and antiquities. The *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* thus grew upon his hands, until it became such an assemblage of ballads, ancient and modern, and of historical annotation, as could only be contained in three octavo volumes. The first two made their appearance in January 1802, and met a favourable reception. Many of the ballads were entirely new to the world; even those which had been published before, here appeared in superior versions. Industry in the collection of copies, and taste in the selection of readings, had enabled the editor to present this branch of popular literature with attractions it never possessed before; while the graceful and intelligent prose interspersed throughout, rich with curious learning, and enlivened by many a pleasant traditionary anecdote, served to constitute the whole as a most agreeable

mélange. The work gave Scott at once a respectable place in the literary republic, more indeed as an editor than as an author, though one would suppose few could be altogether insensible to the spirit and graphic power displayed in the ballads of his own composition.

The public generally, and the booksellers in particular, were agreeably surprised to find the *Minstrelsy*, while bearing the unwonted imprint of 'Kelso,' a marvel of beautiful typography; a circumstance owing to the good taste of James Ballantyne, and which was of some avail in increasing the popularity of the work. It appears that Scott, besides some gains from the first edition, obtained soon after £500 for the copyright.

About this time he inherited between five and six thousand pounds from a paternal uncle. This, with his share of his deceased father's property, his sheriffship, and his wife's allowance from her brother, now advancing to fortune in India, made his income altogether about a thousand a year. He had been ten years at the bar with little success; his gains seldom reaching two hundred a year, and these from the merest drudgeries of the profession. It began, therefore, to appear to him that, in as far as any further income might be required to support his station in life, and advance the prospects of his children, it would be well to look for it rather to some post in the Court of Session, such as one of the principal clerkships, than to practice as a barrister. Assured in the meantime against want, and trusting to such a prospect being realisable by his friends the Buccleuchs and Melvilles, he gradually became disposed to give more of his regards to literature. As to income from this source, he had little hope or faith. Literary research and composition were as yet their own reward

with him; if any more solid remuneration accrued, he was happy to receive it; but he would not depend on such gains. Let literature, he said, be at the utmost a staff—not a crutch. It was natural for a prudent man of the world to form these ideas at that time, when literary biography was little besides a record of privation and sorrow. But it would have, nevertheless, been well for Scott if he had been content with his secured income, and the prospect of only such contingent additions to it as a fixed post or the profits of literature might hold out. To his over-anxious mind, when the temptation came, it appeared different, as we shall presently see.

It was about the time when the *Minstrelsy* was issuing from the press, that Scott was asked by the lovely and amiable Countess of Dalkeith to write a ballad upon a traditionary goblin story respecting the Buccleuch family. He commenced such a composition accordingly, adopting for its measure that of a recent poem of Coleridge; but it grew upon his hands far beyond ballad size. It became, in short, a long romantic narrative, divided into cantos, and *set* in a subordinate narrative, wherein the author represented it as a recitation by the last survivor of the fraternity of minstrels. This was published in January 1805, as *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, and at once placed Scott in the first rank as an original poet, besides determining his fate as henceforth chiefly that of a man of letters. Immediately on the first edition proving successful, the publishers gave £600 for the copyright.

Before this time, Mr Ballantyne had set up a printing-office in Edinburgh, partly by the assistance of a loan from his old friend. Getting rapidly into a considerable business, which his skill and taste amply justified, he

came to require additional capital, and Scott at length agreed to advance the needful sum, on condition of his being made a partner, but a secret one, in the concern. His dread of dependence on literary gains seems to have blinded him to the fact, that mercantile gains are also precarious, and usually attended by risks.

By the interest of his titled friends, he soon after obtained an appointment to the duties of a clerkship in the Court of Session; the salary, however, which afterwards was fixed at £1300 a year, was not to be realised till the death of a superannuated predecessor in office, and, in fact, Scott touched nothing of it till 1812. With such an addition to his solid prospects, one cannot but wonder at the eagerness and assiduity with which he commenced and pursued literary labours of a severely tasking kind; such as an edition of the works of Dryden, a publication of Sadler's State Papers, and a reprint of Somers's collection of Tracts. It seems as if a naturally ambitious and ardent spirit had at length found a vent for its energies, and felt a self-rewarding pleasure in their exercise. At the same time, he gave much of his time to volunteer soldiering, to politics, and to the affairs of literary men less fortunate than himself. The recollections of his friends present a charming picture of his ordinary life at his summer retreat of Ashestiel on the Tweed, where he had found it necessary to establish himself on account of his duties as sheriff of Selkirkshire. His household, enlivened by four healthy children, and superintended by Mrs Scott, was marked by simple elegance. On Sundays, being far from church, he read prayers and a sermon to his family; then, if the weather was good, he would walk with them, servants and all, to some favourite spot at a convenient distance, and dine

with them in the open air. Frequent excursions on horseback, and coursing-matches, varied the tenor of common domestic life. Friends coming to pay visits found him in constant good-humour, and at all times willing to introduce them to the fine scenery and interesting antiquities of the district. In the evenings, his conversation, in which stories and anecdotes formed a large part, was a sure resource against ennui. As a husband and father, he was most kind and indulgent. His children had access to his room at all times; and when they came—unconscious of the nature of his studies—and asked for a story, he would take them on his knee, repeat a tale or a ballad, kiss them, and then set them down again to their sports, never apparently feeling the least annoyance at the interruption. His dogs, of which he always had two or three, were even more privileged, for he kept his window open in nearly all weathers, that they might leap out and in as they pleased.

These were the happiest days of Scott's life, when as yet in the enjoyment of full vigour of body and mind, rather acquiring than reposing upon fame, and unembarrassed by possessions and dignities which afterwards made his position false and dangerous. He occasionally visited London, and allowed himself to go through that kind of exhibition called *lionising*, to which everything famous, or even notorious, is liable to be subjected in the metropolis; but he never was in the slightest degree spoiled by such idolatry. He fully shewed that he estimated it at its real worth, and, after good-naturedly submitting to it, could laugh at its absurdity. It is less pleasant to record a change in his arrangements for study which took place about this

time. Finding the day apt to be broken in upon by little duties and by visitors, he adopted the habit of rising and commencing his literary toils at six in the morning, usually finishing them at twelve, after the interruption of breakfast at ten. His biographer, Mr Lockhart, tells us how careful he was to dress neatly before sitting down, but he says nothing of his preparing for the duty before him by taking food. We have come to understand such things better now, and can easily see what fatal effects might arise in a few years from a habit of performing the principal duties of life with an exhausted system.

The year 1808 saw his poetical reputation brought to its zenith by the publication of the admirable romantic tale of *Marmion*, for which, to the astonishment of the public, Mr Constable undertook beforehand to pay a thousand guineas. Not long after, his zeal in Tory politics, or, as he thought it, solicitude for the honour and safety of his country, then harassed by the Bonaparte wars, led to his quarrelling with this eminent publisher, and to his taking an interest in the establishment of the *Quarterly*, as an opposition to the *Edinburgh Review*. It would have been well if he had stopped here; but the same feelings, helped, perhaps, by that trafficking spirit which had entered into him since he lost hopes at the bar, induced the false step of his setting up a publishing-house in Edinburgh, under the *firm* of John Ballantyne and Company, the ostensible manager being a younger brother of the printer, a clever comical being, not overstocked with worldly prudence, and possessed of few qualifications for business beyond a knowledge of accounts.

From this house issued, in May 1810, his most

pleasing poem, the *Lady of the Lake*, which experienced even greater popularity than either of its two predecessors, and might, if anything could, have made its author a vain man. In this and his two preceding poems, the chief charm lay in the vividness with which the author brought the past before the minds of his readers. He gave the grace, the dignity, the gallantry of old times, free from all their rudeness and grossness. All was done, too, in such an easy and fluent style, that the reader was never wearied. The singular fascination of these writings shewed itself in numberless ways; for one thing, there was a rush of tourists to the scene of the *Lady of the Lake*, so great, as to produce a marked rise of the amount of post-horse duty raised in Scotland. Scott's own firm, in connection with another, undertook to pay two thousand guineas for the *Lady of the Lake*, a fact in authorship at that time without anything approaching to a parallel. Meanwhile, he was urging into print, as a publisher, an *Annual Register* (to commence with the year 1808); an edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, under the care of a drudging German of the name of Weber; a huge quarto, under the title of *Tixall Poetry;* an edition of Defoe's novels; the *Secret Memoirs of the Court of James I.;* and some other books agreeable to his own taste, but hardly to that of the public.

These huge indigestible masses of paper and print had brought his outlay in the printing and publishing concerns up to £9000 before the end of this year. Scarcely ever did the most thoughtless of the tuneful tribe make a more unfortunate adventure than this publishing affair was destined to prove itself. If Scott had instituted some safe and modest copartnery,

to give himself the publishing profits of his own writings, diminished only by expenses and the small profits due to his acting associates, he would have been doing what perhaps it will yet be seen all authors of decided popularity may rightly do. But he had an antiquarian taste, and a disposition to over-estimate all literary productions save his own—he indulged these tendencies in his firm of John Ballantyne and Company, and unavoidably became a great loser. Before it was fully seen that such was to be his fate as a man of business—namely, in the summer of 1811—he had thought so well of his means and prospects—the clerkship salary being now on the eve of realisation—as to resolve on purchasing a hundred acres of land on Tweedside, in order to build a cottage residence for himself, and this notwithstanding that the £4000 requisite in the very first place had to be borrowed, the one half as a permanent burden on the property. Such was the origin of his estate of Abbotsford, where ultimately he reared a castle. The purchase would have been perfectly a right one, if he had not involved his superfluous fortune in business: as things actually stood, it was only preparing for himself needless embarrassments.

His removal to the little estate which he had purchased took place in May 1812, and he soon became involved in the pleasant but costly labours attendant on building, planting, and what is called *making a place.* At the same time, besides attending to other literary avocations, he was composing a fourth romance in verse, which appeared just before the close of the year under the title of *Rokeby*, but in point of popularity proved a comparative failure. Ere this time, the concerns of John Ballantyne and Company were seriously embarrassed,

insomuch that Scott was glad to accept of a little credit from his friend Mr Morritt of Rokeby Park. The difficulties had only increased during the early months of 1813, and it then became necessary for those who had begun in rivalry to Mr Constable, to resort to that publisher for his friendly aid. To give an idea of the fatality of the whole adventure, it appears that the single publication of *Tixall Poetry*, which proved a dead failure, involved an outlay of £2500, while the *Edinburgh Annual Register* was attended by an annual loss of £1000. At the same time, all the parties concerned were living in a style rather suited to their hopes than to their realised profits. To sustain so severe a drainage, the private fortune of Scott, and even his unprecedented literary gains, were inadequate. Fortunately, the hope of regaining the author of *Marmion* as an adherent of his house, induced Mr Constable to grant relief to some extent by the purchase of stock, trusting that the rival house would as soon as possible be extinguished. The Duke of Buccleuch also extended the favour of his credit for the sum of £4000, by means of which, and of further sales of stock to other publishers, the principal difficulties were passed, though not without the most serious vexation to Scott for the greater part of a year. In the midst of his worst perplexities, he resigned an offer of the laureateship to Mr Southey, and was liberal as usual to unfortunate men of letters, sending, for one thing, fifty pounds to Mr Maturin, the Irish novelist.

WAVERLEY NOVELS.

Scott had, so early as 1805, commenced a prose fiction on the manners of the Highlanders, which he

designated *Waverley, or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since.* Discouraged by the unfavourable opinion of his friends regarding the first few chapters, he threw aside the manuscript, which lay accordingly unthought of in an old desk for nine years. Happening to find it while rummaging for fishing-tackle, he bethought him of completing the story, and seriously trying his fortune in a new walk of literature. Three weeks of June 1814 enabled him to add the second and third volumes, and the tale appeared anonymously in the ensuing month. The public almost immediately appreciated its merits, and the first edition of a thousand copies meeting with a quick sale, was speedily followed by a second and a third. The lifelike representation here given of times not too remote for sympathy, and yet sufficiently so in character to tell as eminently romantic, joined to the wonderful ease, spirit, and mingled humour and pathos of the narrative, gave *Waverley* at once a place far above all contemporary novels, and awakened great curiosity regarding the unknown author.

Always unconcerned about the fate of his works, Scott immediately set out on a six weeks' yachting excursion round the north of Scotland, with hardly a chance of hearing news from the world of letters during that time. The excursion was performed in company with the Commissioners of Northern Light-houses, of whom he was the guest. As yet, the Commissioners had no steam-vessel for their annual trips, but used a sailing yacht, provided with arms for defence, in case of attack, against French privateers or other marauders. Sailing from Leith on the 29th July 1814, the party first visited the Isle of May, and thence proceeded northward. In passing, they landed on the Bell Rock, and

inspected the recently erected light-house on that dangerous reef. In the album of the keepers, it is customary for visitors to inscribe their name, along with any passing remark. Sir Walter inscribed the following impromptu lines :

'PHAROS LOQUITUR.

Far on the bosom of the deep,
O'er these wild shelves my watch I keep;
A ruddy gem of changeful light,
Bound on the dusky brow of night:
The seaman bids my lustre hail,
And scorns to strike his timorous sail.'

It was in this northern maritime excursion that Sir Walter visited Shetland, and stored his mind with those materials which afterwards were so charmingly developed in the romance of the *Pirate.*

The secrecy which was maintained regarding the authorship of *Waverley* and the succeeding novels, helped to give them a certain piquancy, independently of their intrinsic merits. At the same time, many reflecting persons were at no loss to see that only the same mind which had reproduced the times of the Jameses in *Marmion* and the *Lady of the Lake*, could have resuscitated the court and camp of the Chevalier in 1745; but with the mass of the public the mystery was successful. Some thought it most likely that Scott's brother, Thomas, had produced this romance; there were even some who attributed it to Mr Jeffrey. Of Thomas he had himself so high an opinion, that he about this time offered him money from his own pocket for any novel he might produce. But the opinion of Walter Scott regarding the literary powers of his contemporaries was of absolutely not the

least value, in consequence of the peculiar generosity of his nature. Thomas Scott and many others whom he stimulated, and helped to become authors, were in the eyes of the world very ordinary persons, and can only be remembered because they were the objects of this great man's love and esteem.

The success of *Waverley*, and the necessity of money to relieve the Ballantyne concern, quickly urged Scott to a new effort in the same walk. During the short vacation at the Christmas of this year (1814), he produced his tale of *Guy Mannering*, which, being published in the ensuing February, was received with transports of delight (more sober language would be quite inappropriate) by both the Scottish and English public. The author had, only a month before, brought out his last great poem, *The Lord of the Isles*, which met with a reception so cool as to convince him that he must now resign the top of the poetical walk to his young rival, Lord Byron. He heard the report of the public decision on this point from James Ballantyne, was disconcerted for a few minutes, and then, recovering his usual spirits, tranquilly resumed the writing of his novel. How much it would tell to the happiness of literary men in general, if they had but a tithe of the equanimity of Scott about the success of their exertions! In the summer of this memorable year he visited the field of Waterloo, and wrote on that subject a descriptive work, entitled *Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk*, and also a poem, which proved a failure in respect of popular approbation. The results of these various labours, with his professional income, not only set him free of the immediate pressure of the publishing encumbrances, but enabled him to add somewhat to his domains on Tweedside. This

year was also memorable to him as that which introduced him to the personal notice of the Prince Regent, who, after greatly enjoying his society at Carlton House, sent him a present of a gold snuff-box set in brilliants.

Scott was now at ease in his circumstances. He had a pleasant house in Edinburgh, No. 39 Castle Street—'dear 39,' as he affectionately called it—where he enjoyed the best society in the Scottish capital. Then, for recreation, he had that fanciful but costly domain on the Tweed. His ordinary and assured income sufficed for any domestic expenditure he chose to indulge in; the recent embarrassments were at an end; and he might calculate on easily adding a few occasional thousands, for the sake of posterity, by no very great exertion of his ever-fertile brain. But who of mortal mould can ever say 'enough,' especially when the temptation of great facility in acquiring is before him. For Scott at this time to grow from the idea of a cottage retreat in the country, to that of a little lairdship and a good sort of mansion, was certainly very natural, when he found that the work of little more than a month at any time could secure him enough of money to buy from fifty to a hundred acres of ground. It was the more so in his case, as his education, and the original bent of his own feelings, alike tended to create in him a veneration for the possession of land. Add to this, that he had a taste for planting and decoration, and felt a genial joy in being bread-giver to a retinue of that kindly peasantry whose virtues he has himself depicted in such lively colours. Of vulgar ambition for wealth and state, there was in Scott not one particle: to be a chief of the soil and its people, and contemplate his children as succeeding him in the same character, was only, with him, to

realise, or set forth in substance, one of the poetical dreams which haunted his mind. It is therefore not surprising at this period to find him far from being disposed to suspend his energies, even although he might have done so under the excuse of somewhat broken health, for he now had frequent visits of stomach-cramp —in no small degree a consequence of some of his literary habits.

The spring of 1816 saw the public in possession of his novel of *The Antiquary*, perhaps, of all his works, the one in which there is most of the current matter of his own mind. It was scarcely published before he had designed his *Tales of My Landlord*, the first series of which came out, as by a new author, in December, and was at once hailed with all the applause accorded to its predecessors, and set down as another offshoot of the same tree. Early in 1817 appeared *Harold the Dauntless*, which, not bearing his name, and being even a greater failure than any of his recent poems, formed the last of that class of his publications. The public might now, perhaps, have had a more rapid succession of novels from his pen, if he had not thought proper to write the historical part of his *Annual Register*, in a vain hope to float that unfortunate work into popularity. As it was, he produced this year his novel of *Rob Roy*, which came out at New Year 1818, and experienced a brilliant reception. So great was his sense of the encouragement extended to these novels, that in 1817 he made purchase of an addition to his property, involving an outlay of no less than £10,000. Just to shew, however, how much generosity towards others was mixed with the no way mean ambition of Scott, his prime object here was to secure a residence for his old school-friend,

Adam Ferguson, and his sisters, whom he was eager to plant near his own fireside. On his concluding a rather hasty bargain for this estate, Ferguson expressed his surprise and concern at seeing him exert so little pains to cheapen it. 'Never say a word about it,' said Scott; 'it will just answer you and the ladies exactly; and it's only scribbling a little more nonsense some of these mornings, to pay anything it costs me more than enough.' From calculations of this kind, Scott is understood to have bought nearly the whole of his landed property at a very large percentage above its actual value.

From this time till the close of 1825—a space of eight years—prosperity reigned unchecked over the life of Scott. His novels of *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, *The Legend of Montrose*, *Ivanhoe*, *The Monastery*, *The Abbot*, *The Pirate*, *Kenilworth*, *The Fortunes of Nigel*, *Peveril of the Peak*, *Quentin Durward*, *St Ronan's Well*, *Redgauntlet*, and the *Tales of the Crusaders*, streamed from his pen with a rapidity as wonderful as their general merits were great. The public read with delight, and Scott was happy to pipe to a dance which led to such solid results for his own benefit. Generally, the first burst of sale called for ten thousand copies, after which the books continued to go off in large numbers in handsome collective reprints. It is odd after all, since Scott had shewed a desire to increase his gains by being his own printer and publisher, that he gave these books to be published by Constable, or whatever other person, on the principle of a division of the profits—a plan far too favourable to the tradesman, considering that the works were sure to sell with little aid from that quarter. A more grasping author

would have given them to be published on commission, and thus realised the whole profit excepting a fraction. The only deduction he made from this liberality to the actual publisher consisted in its being a point with him that the Ballantynes should have a share of that portion of the profits—a mere grace on his part towards men for whom he entertained a friendship. In 1819, Messrs Constable and Company agreed to give him, for the copyright of the novels published up to that time, and certain shares of poetical copyrights, the sum of £12,000. Two years later, the same booksellers purchased for £5000 the copyright of four succeeding novels—little more than a year's work—from which the author had already drawn £10,000. After another similar interval, the author received five thousand guineas for other four novels, which likewise had previously yielded him half-profits. Scott spoke of these sums with triumph and pleasure, as wonderful prices for what he was pleased to call his *yeld kye*—that is, cows which have ceased to give milk. Such a result of successful authorship was a surprising novelty in its day. Nor was the author alone blessed by the pecuniary productiveness of the Waverley Novels. We find the Edinburgh theatrical manager realising £3000 by the brilliant run of the drama formed from *Rob Roy*. A painter gets £300 for sketches to illustrate a section of the tales.

If we reflect on the facility with which Scott could write these inimitable novels—devoting to them merely the mornings of a life full of other business and of amusement—we can hardly be surprised to learn that he thought nothing of entering into engagements with Constable and Company for producing four novels, not

one line of which had then been written, nor even the leading theme determined on. Nor was it wonderful that he should have gradually been tempted to build additions to his house on Tweedside till it became the architectural romance which it now is, and fitted to receive and entertain a large assortment of company.

The house of Abbotsford, where Sir Walter Scott chiefly spent the last twenty years of his life, may be assumed as the centre of a great part of that region which we have styled *his*. This 'romance in stone and lime,' as some Frenchman termed it, is situated on the south bank of the Tweed, at that part of its course where the river bursts forth from the mountainous region of the forest into the more open country of Roxburghshire, two or three miles above the abbey of Melrose, and six-and-thirty from Edinburgh. Though upon a small scale, the Gothic battlements and turrets have a good effect, and would have a still better, if the site of the house were not somewhat straitened by the bank rising above it, and by the too close neighbourhood of the public road. Descriptions of the house, with its armoury, its library, its curiosities, and other particular features, have been given in so many different publications, that no repetition here is necessary. The house, if it be properly preserved, will certainly be perused by future generations as only a different kind of emanation of the genius of this wonderful man; though, preserve it as you will, it will probably be, of all his works, the soonest to perish.

All around Abbotsford, and what gave it a great part of its value in his eyes, are the scenes commemorated in Border history, and tradition, and song. The property itself comprises the spot on which the last feudal battle

was fought in this part of the country. The abbeys of Melrose and Dryburgh, the latter of which now contains the revered dust of the minstrel; the Eildon Hills, renowned in the annals of superstition; Selkirk, whose brave burghers won glory in the field where so much was lost by others, namely, at Flodden; Ettrick Forest, with its lone and storied dales; and Yarrow, whose stream and 'dowie dens' are not to be surveyed without involuntary poetry—are all in the near neighbourhood of the spot. The love, the deep, heartfelt love which Scott bore to the land which contains these places, was such as no stranger can appreciate. It was a passion absorbing many others which might have been expected to hold sway over him, and it survived to the last.

Scott was social and good-natured; to see him and his mansion was an object of ambition to half the public, including the highest persons in the land. He was thus led, during the seven months of the year which he spent in the country, to be the host of so many persons of every kind, that his wife spoke of the house as a hotel in all but the name. Not that he would have voluntarily indulged in any undue expense on this account, if he had been in limited circumstances; but believing himself to be able to afford it, benevolence gave her irresistible dictate that he should thus make himself the servant of the public, even at the expense of much personal inconvenience to himself and his family. It is stated in Mr Lockhart's biography that sixteen uninvited parties came in one day to Abbotsford. These would pass quickly away; but fashionable tourists, some of them of high rank, came in scarcely smaller shoals, to stay one or two days. A lady reports to us, from the conversation of Miss Anne Scott, the younger

daughter of Sir Walter, that on one occasion there were *thirteen ladies'-maids* in the house.

In 1820, Scott was made a baronet. The honour was unsolicited, and he considered himself as accepting it, partly because it was gratifying to his family, and partly with a view to the interests of his eldest son, who had entered a hussar regiment. If he had any enjoyment of the honour in his own breast, it probably arose from no common worldly vanity, but from its touching on some string of romantic feeling amongst those to which we owe his delightful works. Though now a *laird* and a man of title, as well as the head idol in the temple of the intellect-worshippers of his time, he was no whit different from what he had been in his younger days, when content with love and a cottage at Lasswade. His personal tastes and habits, his bearing to his friends, his familiarity with the poor and lowly, remained the same. As Wilkes is said to have never been a Wilkite, so Scott never, to any appearance, joined the opinion which the world entertained about him as an author. He spoke of his labours in this manner to Southey: 'Dallying with time—tossing my ball and driving my hoop.' Such men as Davy and Watt he considered as the true honour of his age and country. At home, in the bosom of his family, when the world would let him alone, he was the most simple and kindly of associates. As he walked about his grounds, he conversed freely and easily with his servants and the peasantry, amongst whom he was an object of the deepest reverence and affection. Often would this illustrious man work half a day at the felling of trees in his woods, beside several workmen, trying which could cut down one with the fewest blows, and laughing

heartily when he was victor. He delighted to walk in the evening towards the house of an aged servant, that he might hear the psalm which the old man was raising with his wife, as they conducted their evening devotions. One of his retinue said to a visitor one day: 'Sir Walter speaks to every man as if they were blood-relations.' It was not a condescending kind of talk he indulged in with these people. He entered into their feelings and tastes, and, speaking their own homely dialect, witched them out of the idea that a master or a laird was before them.

The year 1822 was a somewhat memorable one in Scott's life, on account of the concern he had to take in the arrangements necessary on the occasion of the king's visit to Scotland. The external character of this piece of pageantry was much determined by that revival of national and medieval associations which the novels had effected. Everywhere we were reminded of the Stuarts in Holyrood, and the plaided clansmen on their mountains. Feelings due towards the romantic kings of an elder day were expended, often ludicrously, on the battered beau of Carlton House and St James's Street. Amidst the delirium of the time, the man chiefly concerned in giving it a peculiar character, moved in perfect possession of his wonderful powers of management, dictating or advising in the principal doings, and attending to the minutest details of many of them. The king afterwards expressed, both formally and in private, his deep sense of obligation to Scott for what he had done to make this visit pass off well. The affair is interesting for the proof it gives of the business genius of Scott, and his qualifications for the affairs of the world. Assuredly never was high imagination united

with so many of the soberest mental qualities as in his instance.

His qualifications as a man of the world shone in various functions which he consented to assume about this time, as the presidency of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, that of an antiquarian book-printing association called the Bannatyne Club, the chairmanship of an oil-gas factory, and so forth. He had no inclination to thrust himself into such situations, but having been drawn into them, he set about the business which they involved with all the requisite zeal, and with a marvellous amount of skill, good temper, and judgment. The common-sense and sagacity which he exhibited in the performance of these duties, form, perhaps, a greater distinction between Scott and the generality of literary men than even his transcendent genius.

Sir Walter, as has been stated, had strong Conservative leanings, in which respect he sometimes unfortunately went beyond the dictates of prudence. In 1820, he endeavoured to prove the absurdity of the popular excitement in favour of a more extended kind of parliamentary representation, by three papers which he inserted in the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* newspaper, under the title of 'The Visionary.' However well intended, these were not by any means happy specimens of political disquisition. The truth is, Sir Walter, with all his high literary gifts, did not possess the art of concocting a short essay, either on politics or on any moral or general topic. He appears, moreover, to have been in a great measure ignorant of the arguments and strength of his political opponents. He treats them as if they were in the mass a set of simple and uninformed people, led away by a few raving demagogues; and his

attempt, accordingly, appears nearly as ridiculous as it might be to address grown men with the arguments which prevail only with children. Some months afterwards, it was deemed necessary by a few of the Tory gentlemen and lawyers, to establish a newspaper in which the more violent of the radical prints should be met upon their own grounds, and reprisals made for a long course of insults which had hitherto been endured with patience. To this association Sir Walter subscribed, and, by means partly furnished upon his credit, a weekly journal was commenced under the title of *The Beacon.* As the scurrilities of this print inflicted much pain in very respectable quarters, and finally led to the death of one of the writers in a duel, it sunk, after an existence of a few months, amidst the general execrations of the community. Sir Walter Scott, though he probably never contemplated, and perhaps was hardly aware of the guilt of *The Beacon*, was loudly blamed for his connection with it. It must be allowed, in extenuation of his offence, that the whole affair was only an experiment, to try the effect of violent argument on the Tory side, and that, if it did not exceed the warmth of the radical prints, there was nothing abstractly unfair in the attempt. On the other hand, a party who stand in the light of governors, and who, in general, are placed in comfortable circumstances, assume violence with a much worse grace than the multitudinous plebeians, who are confessedly in a situation from which complaint and irritation are almost inseparable.

[SIR WALTER AND MR R. CHAMBERS.

In his preface to the new edition of the *Traditions of Edinburgh* (1869), Mr R. Chambers gives the following

account of the manner in which he became acquainted with Scott. 'When not out of my teens, I attracted some attention from Sir Walter Scott, by writing for him and presenting him (through Mr Constable) a transcript of the songs of the *Lady of the Lake*, in a style of peculiar caligraphy' [resembling small print], 'which I practised for want of any way of attracting the notice of people superior to myself. When George IV., some months afterwards, came to Edinburgh' [August 1822], 'good Sir Walter remembered me, and procured for me the business of writing the address of the Royal Society of Edinburgh to His Majesty, for which I was handsomely paid. Several other learned bodies followed the example, for Sir Walter was the arbiter of everything during that frantic time, and thus I was substantially benefited by his means.

'According to what Mr Constable told me, the great man liked me, in part, because he understood I was from Tweedside. On seeing the earlier numbers of the *Traditions*' [1823] 'he expressed astonishment as to "where a boy got all the information." But I did not see or hear from him till the first volume had been completed. He then called upon me one day, along with Mr Lockhart. I was overwhelmed with the honour, for Sir Walter was almost an object of worship to me. I literally could not utter a word. While I stood silent, I heard him tell his companion that Charles Sharpe was a writer in the *Traditions*. A few days after this visit, Sir Walter sent me, along with a kind letter, a packet of manuscript, consisting of sixteen folio pages, in his usual close hand-writing, and containing all the reminiscences he could at that time summon up of old persons and things in Edinburgh. Such a treasure to me! And

such a gift from the greatest literary man of the age to the humblest! Is there a literary man of the present age who would scribble as much for any humble aspirant? Nor was this the only act of liberality of Scott to me. When I was preparing a subsequent work, *The Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, he sent me whole sheets of his recollections, with appropriate explanations. For years thereafter, he allowed me to join him in his walks home from the Parliament House, in the course of which he freely poured into my greedy ears anything he knew regarding the subjects of my studies. His kindness and good-humour on these occasions were untiring. I have since found, from his journal, that I had met him on certain days when his heart was overladen with woe. Yet, his welcome to me was the same. After 1826, however, I saw him much less frequently than before, for I knew he grudged every moment not spent in thinking and working on the fatal tasks he had assigned to himself for the redemption of his debts.'

It was in one of their walks through the Old Town that Scott pointed out the place of his birth to my brother; also the little old school in Hamilton's Entry, where he had received some of his rudimentary instruction. On another occasion, he shewed him the house once occupied by Dr Daniel Rutherford at the foot of Hyndford's Close, where he had often been when a boy. It is a fine antique edifice, reputed to have been the residence of the Earl of Selkirk in 1742. Latterly, it has undergone some changes, with a new entrance from the Mint Close, and forms the residence of a Roman Catholic clergyman, in connection with a neighbouring chapel. Sir Walter communicated to Robert a curious circumstance connected with this old mansion. 'It

appears that the house immediately adjacent was not furnished with a stair wide enough to allow a coffin being carried down in decent fashion. It had, therefore, what the Scottish law calls a *servitude* upon Dr Rutherford's house, conferring the perpetual liberty of bringing the deceased inmates through a passage into that house, and down its stair into the lane.']

LATER NOVELS, AND LIFE OF NAPOLEON.

Scott had at this time the appearance of a respectable elderly country-gentleman. Tall, robust, and rather handsome in person, he was deformed by the shortness of his right limb, the foot of which only touched the ground at the toes, while he rocked from side to side on the support of a stout walking-cane, which he moved along with the foot, and put down at the same time. While living in town, he wore a common black suit; in the country, he had gray trousers, a short green jacket, and a white hat. The public is made familiar with his face by numberless portraits; it is only necessary to mention, that at this time it was ruddy with the glow of health, and at the same time somewhat venerable from his thin gray hair. The countenance and quick gray eye usually had a common-world expression, but of a benevolent kind. All was changed, however, when he told anything serious, or recited a piece of ballad poetry; he then seemed to become a being of a totally different grade and sphere.

It has been hinted that Scott's eldest son, Walter, had become an officer in a hussar regiment. This youth, in 1825, wedded a young heiress, Miss Jobson, much to the satisfaction of his father, who, in the marriage-

contract, placed against the young lady's fortune a settlement of the estate of Abbotsford upon his son, reserving only his own liferent. He declared that he thus parted with the property of his lands with more pleasure than he ever derived from the acquisition or possession of them. He at the same time expended £3500 in purchasing a company for his son. It was now that the great poet might be considered as at the height of his fortunes. His career had hitherto been an almost uninterrupted series of prosperous and happy events; he had risen from the briefless barrister to the head of the literary world, a title, and the possession of a landed fortune, with the prospect of leaving a race of gentry to follow him. Alas! even while thus triumphantly exalted, the ground was hollow beneath his feet, and a sad prostration was approaching.

Keeping this reverse for its proper place, it is proper here to mention that the novels had fallen off somewhat in popularity since *The Monastery*. The author was not made aware of this fact; but he nevertheless felt the necessity of varying his themes as much as possible, in order to preserve the public favour. Hence his shifting ground to England and France, and his attempt, in *St Ronan's Well*, to depict the society of the modern world. Latterly, he bethought him that history was a field of some promise, and he was disposed to enter it. It was now (June 1825) that Mr Constable, moved by some examples of popular publishing in London, adopted the idea that that trade had never been conducted on right principles, seeing that it sought customers only in the more affluent classes, while the masses were left to regard books as luxuries beyond their reach. He projected a periodical issue of volumes, at a comparatively

low price, to consist of reprints of approved copyright works belonging to his house, mingled with original works; and claiming and obtaining the support of Scott, it was arranged that the Waverley Novels should reappear in this cheap form, alternated at starting with the volumes of a *Life of Napoleon Bonaparte*, to be composed for the purpose by the same author. Thus was Scott set down, in 1825, to the history of one whose career he had beheld, while it lasted, with the strongest sentiments of reprobation and hatred, feeling, as he did, that the French emperor was the public enemy of England in the first place, and all Europe in the second. It was at first intended that the work should consist of four volumes, or less than a half of what it ultimately became.

Just before going seriously into his task, he paid a visit to his son in Ireland, where he was received and entertained with the greatest enthusiasm by all classes—to his own surprise, as he had regarded the Irish as not a reading people. He had not reflected that there is such a thing as lionising great authors on the strength of their fame, and without any but a superficial acquaintance, if so much, with their writings. The contrast between the elegant mansions of the gentry in which he lived, with the misery of the houses of the general population, awoke painful feelings in his mind; but, upon the whole, he much enjoyed his tour in Ireland. In the latter part of this year, a second domestic change took place. His eldest daughter, Sophia, had been married in 1820 to Mr J. G. Lockhart, a young barrister, whose talents in literature have been fully acknowledged by the public. Hitherto, the young couple had lived in his immediate neighbourhood,

both in town and country. He delighted in the ballads which Mrs Lockhart sang to him with the accompaniment of her harp; he found Mr Lockhart a useful adviser in literary matters, and a most agreeable companion; and he felt the tenderest interest in their eldest child, called John Hugh, or, familiarly, 'Hugh Littlejohn,' whose fatal delicacy of constitution only heightened the affection he was otherwise fitted to excite. In consequence of an offer of the editorship of the *Quarterly Review*, Mr Lockhart removed to London with his family, by which Scott's family circle was of course much contracted. This, however, was but a trifling evil compared with others which were about to befall the hitherto fortunate author of *Waverley*.

PECUNIARY MISFORTUNES.

The years 1824 and 1825 were distinguished by an extraordinary mania for speculation, the consequence of which was, that, towards the close of the latter year, a scarcity of money began to be generally felt. A tightening of this kind always of course tells severely upon men who have been keeping up their trade by means of fictitious bills; and of this class it now appeared were Archibald Constable and Company. The leading member of this firm had been fortunate in the proprietorship of the *Edinburgh Review*, and the publishing of many of the works of Scott. Naturally grand in his ideas, and of an aspiring temper, at the same time that he despised, and in practice wholly overlooked, common mercantile calculations, he had come to conduct business in a manner which usually leads to ruin. We have seen that the bookselling concern of Scott (John

Ballantyne and Company) was indebted to him for some important assistance in enabling it to wind up; the printing concern (James Ballantyne and Company) was also indebted to him for a vast amount of business; while Scott, more personally, was so imprudent as to take bill payments from him for works as yet unwritten, that he might help out his equally imprudent purchases of land. By these means, it came about very naturally that the name of James Ballantyne and Company—that is, Sir Walter Scott—was lent to Constable and Company for the raising of large sums amongst the banks. Scott, venerating the supposed sagacity of Constable, recked not of the danger of this traffic. Constable himself, inflated with a high sense of the literary property and stock which he held, regarded himself as a rich man, notwithstanding the large borrowings to which he condescended. James Ballantyne, venerating both, easy of nature, and unprepared by education or habit to keep a rigid supervision over business matters, gave no alarm regarding the immense compromise of his own and his friend's name.

These explanations serve so far; for what more is necessary, it must, we fear, be admitted that the whole group of persons concerned in the poems and novels, including the mighty Magician himself, were naturally enough intoxicated to a certain degree by a literary success so infinitely exceeding all precedent. All of them, excepting James Ballantyne, had lived in an expensive manner. Scott himself had gone in this respect a good way beyond what prudence dictated, though it is also very certain that if his writings had been published under reasonably favourable circumstances for the realisation of profit, he might have

bought land, and kept house as he did, without injury to anybody. All, moreover, had been culpably negligent about accounts and bargainings—Scott ridiculously so, to his own injury, as there appears no good reason for his dividing the six or eight thousand pounds realised by the first issues of his novels with his booksellers, to whom a commission on sales would have been remuneration sufficient. There was, however, at that time a much more loose and heedless fashion in most business affairs than now prevails, and this requires that some allowance should be made with regard to individual cases. So it was that one of the firmest, and, generally speaking, most sagacious men of his time, discovered, in the course of January 1826, that he was involved in obligations far exceeding the extent of his whole fortune—was, in short, a ruined man.

On the 18th December 1825, fearing bad news of Constable's affairs, he says, in a diary which he kept, and surely few more touching words have ever fallen from any man's pen: 'Men will think pride has had a fall. Let them indulge their own pride in thinking that my fall will make them higher, or seem so at least. I have the satisfaction to recollect that my prosperity has been of advantage to many, and to hope that some at least will forgive my transient wealth, on account of the innocence of my intentions, and my real wish to do good to the poor. Sad hearts, too, at Darnick and in the cottages of Abbotsford. I have half resolved never to see the place again. How could I tread my hall with such a diminished crest?—how live a poor indebted man, where I was once the wealthy, the honoured? I was to have gone there on Saturday, in joy and prosperity, to receive my friends. My dogs will wait for me

in vain. It is foolish—but the thoughts of parting from these dumb creatures have moved me more than any of the painful reflections I have put down. Poor things! I must get them kind masters. There may be yet those who, loving me, may love my dog, because it has been mine. I must end these gloomy forebodings, or I shall lose the tone of mind with which men should meet distress. I feel my dogs' feet on my knees—I hear them whining and seeking me everywhere. This is nonsense, but it is what they would do could they know how things may be.'

The evil day had not yet come in all its reality. Mr Constable went to London, to endeavour to raise money on the copyrights he possessed, in order to put over the difficulties. Moderate-minded men of the present day read, as of something belonging to a different state of society, of this 'Napoleon of the realms of print' seriously expecting to raise one or two hundred thousand pounds on the pledge of his copyrights, one large section of which afterwards, at a fair auction, brought only £8500; his whole property being such as only in the long-run to pay 2s. 9d. a pound upon debts amounting to £256,000. Having utterly failed in raising money on any terms amongst those who deal in it, he induced Scott to advance him ten thousand, which the Laird of Abbotsford was only able to do by acting upon a right he had reserved in his son's marriage-contract to borrow that sum on the security of his estate, for the benefit of his younger children. And this last sacrifice for Mr Constable he afterwards, very naturally, grudged more than all the rest. It was on the 17th of January that Scott finally ascertained the ruin of his affairs. 'It was hard, after having fought such a battle,' as he says in

his diary; but he sustained the first shock with Roman firmness. His resolution was immediately taken, to accept of no grace from his creditors beyond time. 'God grant me health and strength,' he said in deep solemnity to his several friends, 'and I will yet pay every man his due.' To those marvellous powers which he had exerted for the purpose of buying land and keeping state, he trusted for the means of clearing off the tremendous encumbrance which had fallen upon him. At the same time, *state* was to be given wholly up. He resolved to sell his house in Edinburgh—'dear 39'—and use a common lodging while obliged to attend his duties in the Court of Session. At other times he would join his family in strict retirement at Abbotsford, which obviously could have been put to no better use. There was no bravado in all this—nothing but a good, sound, honest resolution to redeem the painful obligations into which his imprudence had hurried him. In the same frame of mind, he declined many offers of money made to him by friends.

He was engaged at the time of his misfortunes in writing the *Life of Bonaparte*, taking up his new novel of *Woodstock* at intervals, by way of relief. These tasks he continued with steady perseverance in the midst of all his distresses. Even on the day which brought him assurance of the grand catastrophe, he resumed in the afternoon the task which had engaged him in the morning. There was more triumph over circumstances here than might be supposed, for he had lately begun to feel the first touches of the infirmities of age—age, to which ease, not hard work, is naturally appropriate. His sleep was now less sound than it had been; his eyesight was failing; and, above all, he felt that backwardness of the

intellectual power which is inseparable from years. The will, however, was green as ever, and, under the prompting of an honourable spirit, it did its work nobly. Doggedly, doggedly did this glorious old man rouse himself from his melancholy couch, and set to his task at an hour when gaiety has little more than sought his. Firmly did he keep to his desk during long hours, till he could satisfy himself that he had done his utmost. The temptations of society, the more insinuating claims of an overworked system for rest, were alike resolutely rejected. The world must ever hear with wonder, that between the third day after his bankruptcy and the fifteenth day thereafter, he had written a volume of *Woodstock*, although several of these days had been spent in comparative vacancy, to allow the imagination time for brooding. He believed that, for a bet, he could have written this volume *in ten days!* Just a fortnight after his final breach with fortune, he says in his journal: 'I have now no pecuniary provisions to embarrass me, and I think, now the shock of the discovery is past and over, I am much better off on the whole. . . . I shall be free of a hundred petty public duties imposed on me as a man of consideration—of the expense of a great hospitality—and, what is better, of the waste of time connected with it. I have known in my day all kinds of society, and can pretty well estimate how much or how little one loses by retiring from all but that which is very intimate. . . . If I could see those about me as indifferent to the loss of rank as I am, I should be completely happy. As it is, time must salve that sore, and to time I trust it.' With such philosophy could Scott regard his reverses, even in the very crisis of their occurrence, and yet from many other

passages we find a keen sensibility to the circumstances of his downfall. It was rectitude of mind, and not stoicism, which enabled him to rise above his misfortunes. Nothing, indeed, of sensibility appeared in his external demeanour, even to his children. To them, as to the world, it must have been a lost secret, but for his diary.

The obligations of James Ballantyne and Company—that is, of Sir Walter Scott—were finally ascertained to amount to £117,000, of which only £46,000 were the proper liabilities of his company.

Early in spring, the ministry made an effort to correct the unsound state of things which had led to the late fatal mania, by attempting to pass a bill for the limitation of bank circulation. It was determined to suppress all notes under five pounds. In Scotland, where there is a vast faith in the utility of one-pound bank-notes, and no other circulation is so much liked, this measure was very unpopular. By the banks, it was regarded as fraught with ruin to their interests. Scott, who had disapproved of some recent changes affecting old Scottish institutions, and whose mind, serene as it was, perhaps required some kind of vent for its own vexations, was led to take a strong, perhaps exaggerated view of this question, under which he wrote three letters, in the character of Malachi Malagrowther, originally published in a newspaper, afterwards as a pamphlet. His great humour and fund of droll anecdote gave wings to this production, and helped to rouse the Scottish people to an attitude of resistance, to which, in the long-run, the ministry gave way. The affair presented Scott in a new light—namely, as one setting himself up against authority, and appealing to popular sentiment on

the adverse side. The public was somewhat surprised; the ministers, some of whom were his friends, felt hurt at opposition from such a quarter; and there was actually some dryness between him and Lord Melville for a short time. The explanation is, that Scott never was a servile friend of power, but one only as far as his view of what was good for the country led him; and there was a manliness and independence in his character which admitted of no hesitation about a course, when he saw only men on the one side, and the land of his birth on the other. It is gratifying to think that Scott lost no friendship by his conduct on this occasion, beyond a temporary coldness on the part of a few persons.

The novel of *Woodstock* came rapidly to completion, and, early in April, the first edition of it was sold in the printed sheets for £8228, in itself a proof that the author might have all along had a better market for his works if he had chosen. This was a cheering omen of what he was to do for his creditors. Removing at the close of the winter session to Abbotsford, he continued there his habits of application with unabated vigour, although, as appears from the diary, not without some battlings between duty and inclination. The daily amount of work he set to himself in the writing of Napoleon's life was four sheets of manuscript a day, making about twenty-four of the printed pages. We find him on one occasion finishing this before noon—a surprising effort, considering that reference to his authorities or materials must have often been necessary during the progress of the work. At the same time he commenced another work of fiction, a series of tales entitled *Chronicles of the Canongate*, for he felt the one task as a relief to the other.

He now of course received no company at his rural retreat. Only a few intimate friends of his neighbourhood occasionally joined the family circle. It was a melancholy spring to one whose life in the country had hitherto been a constant holiday. To add to his griefs, the health of his wife had sunk to a low pitch. His kind-hearted Charlotte died on the 16th of May, of water in the chest, the end being somewhat accelerated by the late disasters. Scott, absent at the moment on duty in Edinburgh, quickly hurried home. The event itself, and the grief of his younger daughter on the occasion, powerfully affected him. He thus communes with himself in his journal: 'It would have been inexpressibly moving to me as a stranger—what was it, then, to the father and the husband! For myself, I scarce know how I feel—sometimes as firm as the Bass Rock, sometimes as weak as the water that breaks on it. I am as alert at thinking and deciding as I ever was in my life. Yet, when I contrast what this place now is with what it has been not long since, I think my heart will break. Lonely, aged, deprived of my family—all but poor Anne; an impoverished, an embarrassed man, deprived of the sharer of my thoughts and counsels, who could always talk down my sense of the calamitous apprehensions which break the heart that must bear them alone. Even her foibles were of service to me, by giving me things to think of beyond my weary self-reflections.'

Allowing himself little rest for the indulgence of grief, he quickly resumed, or rather hardly interrupted his usual employments. Between the 12th of June and the 12th of August he wrote the fourth volume of *Napoleon*, besides a portion of his novel. Thus he wrought all the

summer, and part of the autumn, till it was found necessary that he should pay a visit to London and Paris, in order to consult documents necessary for *Napoleon.* This journey occupied six weeks, and perhaps was useful as a rally to his spirits. It is hardly necessary to say that, with high and low, wherever he went, he was an object of as cordial admiration and interest as ever. The king, the Duke of Wellington, and many other eminent persons, paid him marked attentions. In France, he was treated with no less distinction. Public papers in both countries were placed at his disposal without reserve; and in London he obtained an assurance that his second son, Charles, would be employed in the diplomatic department.

Till the failure of Messrs Constable and Company, the Waverley secret was kept inviolate, though intrusted, as he has himself acknowledged, to a considerable number of persons. The inquiries which took place into the affairs of the house rendered it no longer possible to conceal the nature of its connection with Sir Walter Scott; and he now accordingly stood fully detected as the Author of *Waverley*, though he did not himself think proper to make any overt claim to the honour. It may be mentioned that, at the time of the failure, Sir Walter was in possession of bills for the novel of *Woodstock*, of which but a small part had as yet been written. A demand was made by the creditors of Messrs Constable and Company upon the creditors of Sir Walter Scott, for the benefits of this work, when it should be made public. But the author, not reckoning this either just or legal, was resolved not to comply. The bills, he said, were a mere promise to pay; since, then, he had only promised to write, and they to pay,

he would simply not write, and then the transaction would fall to the ground. On the claim being farther pressed, he said: 'The work is in my head, and there it shall remain.' The question, however, was eventually submitted to arbitration, and decided in favour of the creditors of the author, for whose behoof the work was soon after published.

The fact of the authorship continued to waver between secrecy and divulgement till the 23d of February 1827, when Sir Walter presided at the first annual dinner of the Edinburgh Theatrical Fund Association, in the Assembly Rooms. There Lord Meadowbank, in proposing the health of the chairman, used language to the following effect: 'It was no longer possible, consistently with the respect to one's auditors, to use upon this subject terms either of mystification, or of obscure or indirect allusion. The clouds have been dispelled; the *darkness visible* has been cleared away; and the Great Unknown—the Minstrel of our native land—the mighty Magician who has rolled back the current of time, and conjured up before our living senses the men and manners of days which have long passed away, stands revealed to the hearts and the eyes of his affectionate and admiring countrymen.' Sir Walter, though somewhat taken by surprise, immediately resolved to throw off the mantle, which was getting somewhat tattered. 'He did not think,' he said, 'that, in coming here to-day, he would have the task of acknowledging before three hundred gentlemen a secret which, considering that it was communicated to more than twenty people, had been remarkably well kept. He was now before the bar of his country, and might be understood to be on trial before Lord Meadowbank as an offender; yet he was

sure that every impartial jury would bring in a verdict of *Not Proven.* He did not now think it necessary to enter into the reasons of his long silence. Perhaps caprice had a great share in it. He had now to say, however, that the merits of these works, if they had any, and their faults were entirely imputable to himself.' [Here the audience broke into an absolute shout of surprise and delight.] 'He was afraid to think on what he had done. "Look on 't again I dare not." He had thus far unbosomed himself, and he knew that it would be reported to the public. He meant, then, seriously to state that, when he said he was the author, he was the total and undivided author. With the exception of quotations, there was not a single word written that was not derived from himself, or suggested in the course of his reading. The wand was now broken, and the rod buried. His audience would allow him further to say, with Prospero: "Your breath has filled my sails."'

The spring of 1827 was past, and summer had gone to June, ere Scott's great task was completed. He then finished the last volume of his *Life of Napoleon*, which he had been engaged upon for about two years, but had actually written in scarcely more than a twelvemonth of continuous time. The paper and print of the first and second editions, in nine volumes, brought the creditors £18,000—an amount of gain, in relation to amount of labour, unexampled in the history of literature, and which will probably have no parallel for ages to come. The book was unfortunate in its excessive length; and, written in such haste, it could not be expected to be very perfect, either in style or in facts. Yet it made a tolerably fair impression on the public, and it has since

rather advanced than receded in public esteem. The contrast between the manner of its composition and that of Hume, Robertson, and Gibbon's works, is startling. All of these narratives were the study and the production of years. It had never till now entered the head of man to think of a great historical task being executed in a twelvemonth. The last-century historians filed and polished their writings sentence by sentence—Scott did not once reperuse the matter which had flowed from his pen. And all this labour had been performed in the midst of grief and shaken health, and without interfering with official duties, one of which called for several hours a day during five months of the twelve.

LATER EXERTIONS.

Immediately on concluding *Napoleon*, he commenced another historical work, his delightful *Tales of a Grandfather;* presenting a selection of the most striking points from the Scottish chroniclers, in a style designed to suit the intelligence of his descendant, 'Hugh Littlejohn.' This he carried on alternately with his *Chronicles of the Canongate*, the first series of which appeared early in the ensuing winter, and was well, though not brilliantly received. He underwent at this period some harassment from a Jewish London house, holding one of Constable and Company's bills for £2000. With a view to forcing payment by some means, they threatened Scott with arrest; and he actually contemplated at one moment resorting to that sanctuary (Holyrood), in which he placed his imaginary hero, Chrystal Croftangry. At length the vexation was taken off his head by Sir William Forbes, the leading member of a banking

company who were amongst his chief creditors. This generous man paid the sum out of his own pocket, without letting Scott suppose but that it was arranged for by the body of creditors. It is pleasant to know that Scott unconsciously underwent several obligations of this nature on the part of other old friends. The first series of the *Tales of a Grandfather* appeared before the end of 1827, and was hailed with more rapture than any work of his for several years. This was the date of another happy circumstance of a more important kind. The copyrights of his novels and of a large proportion of his poetical writings being presented for sale by Constable and Company's creditors, a purchase of them was made for £8500, on the part of his own creditors as half-sharers, while the other half belonged to Mr Robert Cadell, a member of Constable's late house, now independently in business. It was designed that the novels should be republished by Cadell in a comparatively cheap form, with notes and prefaces by the author, and certain trinkets of embellishment, such as—according to his own phrase—elderly beauties are supposed to require. It was hoped that the share of profits due to his creditors would tell materially to the reduction of the debts; and this hope was more than realised. Meanwhile, a first dividend was paid to these gentlemen from the aggregate gains of Scott's pen during the two past years, amounting very nearly to the unheard-of sum of £40,000. Such were the first-fruits of that hardy industry which he had determined to exert for the redemption of his credit and good name.

Scott's conduct and demeanour towards his old associates in business affairs become a matter of some

importance, as it too often happens that commercial adversity introduces wrath into such fraternities. It is pleasant to relate, that even towards Mr Constable, who had been the cause of so much loss, he maintained a friendly bearing. He did not, indeed, shut his eyes to the new view he had obtained of Mr Constable's character as a man of business; but though he could trust no longer, he was far from hardening his heart. One thing he felt sorely—his last advance for Constable when in the jaws of ruin. Nor was it a soothing circumstance that the bookseller had endeavoured to get his credit for £20,000 more, which would have only been an additional loss at the speedy and inevitable day of reckoning. Still, he was willing to regard all this as only the effect of sanguine calculations; and accordingly all his expressions regarding the fallen publisher, both in his diary and his letters, are of a mild and even kindly tenor. Mr Cadell, on the other hand, had secured Sir Walter's esteem and confidence by an honest warning which he gave as to the above £20,000. From the first, he determined to befriend this member of the late house in preference to the other. With regard to James Ballantyne, Scott told him, on the very day when ruin was declared, that he would never forsake him. Mr Ballantyne now conducted business on his own account, and was honoured with the steady friendship and patronage of his old schoolfellow, as of yore.

On the other hand, the conduct of Scott's immediate dependants had been highly creditable. Deeply attached, in consequence of his long-enduring kindness, all were anxious to remain, if possible, about his person. His butler, Dalgleish, said he would take any or no wages, but go he would not. His coachman, Peter Matheson,

went to work with his horses at the plough, glad to the core that he was allowed to remain at Abbotsford on such terms.

The spring of 1828 gave the world *The Fair Maid of Perth*, his last popular novel. He then indulged in a little relaxation, by spending a few weeks in London, in the enjoyment of Mr and Mrs Lockhart's society, as well as that of many attached friends. We have at this time a valuable addition to that testimony to his temper which the second last paragraph affords. He had some years before engaged his credit for £1200 in favour of his friend Daniel Terry the actor, who was then undertaking the management of the Adelphi Theatre. Being now informed of the ruin of Mr Terry's affairs, he wrote him a letter, in which the following passage occurs: 'For my part, I feel as little title, as God knows I have the wish, to make any reflections on the matter, beyond the most sincere regret on your own account. The sum for which I stand noted in the schedule is of no consequence in the now more favourable condition of my affairs. . . . I told your solicitor that I desired he would consider me as a friend of yours, desirous to take, as a creditor, the measures which seemed best to forward your interest.' These are precious things to put into a biography; but they do not exhaust the list. Even while drudging so hard for the means of diminishing his own encumbrances, he is found pretty frequently composing and giving away a paper for the benefit of some unfortunate man of letters, little regarding, perhaps, the strict merits of the object of his bounty. One of the most remarkable of these benefactions consisted in his allowing the publication of two religious discourses for the benefit of a young man endeared to

him by misfortune as well as merit. This publication yielded £250, a sum which few other literary men would allow to pass from their own pockets in such a manner

A great part of his time was now taken up with the new writing connected with the popular edition of his works; yet before the end of 1828 he had advanced a good way with a new novel, the ground of which he laid in Switzerland, notwithstanding his being acquainted with the scenery of that country only by description and engravings. His mind was now in a more cheerful mood regarding his affairs than it had been since the dreadful January 1826; and if he had been free of various ailments, inclusive of rheumatism, caught from a damp bed in France, he might have enjoyed his life in the country almost as heartily as ever. Suffer as he might, perseverance at his desk was a fixed principle with him. Of this we have a striking trait in his finishing *Anne of Geierstein* before breakfast one morning, and commencing, as soon as the meal was over, a new work, a *History of Scotland*, for Lardner's *Cabinet Cyclopædia.*

The prospectus of what he called his *opus magnum*—namely, the re-issue of the Waverley Novels—came out in February 1829, and was so exceedingly well received that an edition of 10,000 seemed the least he could throw off, a number which in those days appeared immense. When the book was published, it was quickly found that this edition would be quite insufficient to supply the public demand. In short, the sale of the early volumes was not under 35,000. This was of course magnificent success, and afforded the prognostic of a much quicker and more easy settlement of the

debts than had been anticipated. The volumes were sold at five shillings. It was easy to see that, when a certain section of the public had been supplied at that rate, a still cheaper edition might be issued with benefit to all concerned. Thus it might be hoped that Sir Walter would in time rest a free man, with little help from his own immediate exertions. His heart rebounded at the prospect; and he even glanced at the possibility of adding to his son's estate before he died. The public, too, had their visions on the subject, and, under the idea that his embarrassments were, comparatively speaking, at an end, the old stream of tourists and friend-visitors began once more to pour into Abbotsford. The only drawback was in the infirm and failing health.

CONCLUDING YEARS—DECEASE.

In February 1830, Scott experienced the first decidedly bad symptom, in an attack of an apoplectic nature, which caused him to fall speechless and insensible on the floor. This, it seems, was a hereditary affection in his family, and it therefore gave him the greater apprehension, though his physicians were of opinion that the attack proceeded from the stomach. On still went the pen of the ready-writer, now engaged on a volume of *Demonology* for Murray's *Family Library*. To obtain even more time for literary task-work, he now resigned his clerkship on a retiring allowance of £800 a year, and went to fix himself at Abbotsford as a permanent residence. It was an injudicious step, as it deprived him of the society of most of his old friends, and threw him more and more upon that task-work which had already been prosecuted only too zealously. His friends,

Cadell and Ballantyne, were now sensible that he had carried his zeal for the discharge of his debts too far, and would have fain restricted him to lighter duty; but it was difficult to deal with a mind acting under such powerful impulses. Greatly against their wishes, he commenced a new novel, styled *Count Robert of Paris*, which, when it appeared, shewed very clearly how glory had departed from him. He also embroiled his mind in the politics of the crisis then passing, and wrote a long pamphlet against the reforming measures of the day, which afterwards he was induced to suppress. The exaggerated view which he took of the reform cause is a painful chapter in his history, not merely as shewing him unusually ill informed and weak of judgment on passing events, but because it gave a needless addition to anxieties of a real kind which were now pressing severely on the springs of life. Amidst the vexations arising to him from public affairs, one ray of pleasure visited him when his creditors (December 1830) presented him with his library, furniture, plate, and articles of virtù, considered as equivalent to £10,000, thus enabling him to make a provision for the younger branches of his family. These gentlemen were led to this act of generosity by their sense of his unparalleled exertions in their behalf. Their claims against Scott had now been reduced to £54,000, and as he had insured £22,000 upon his life in their favour, and the Waverley Novels were continuing to produce large returns, all doubt of the ultimate discharge of the claims had ceased. About this time, the honour of being made a member of the Privy Council was offered to him, but peremptorily declined, as unsuitable to his circumstances.

In November of the past year, Scott had had another slight stroke of apoplexy. He lived in the most sparing manner, yet this did not prevent a distinct paralytic affection befalling him in April 1831. From this he recovered, by the care of a good surgeon, in a few days, and was then placed, by way of caution, upon extremely low diet, which, however, he did not always adhere to. He was now extremely infirm in walking, and, from heedlessness, often tumbled over articles of furniture or other impediments. The desire to be writing continued, nevertheless, in full vigour as a ruling passion. Here, however, he was destined to receive a shock more terrible to him than bodily illness, when his friends, Cadell and Ballantyne, felt it right to tell him that his tale of *Count Robert of Paris* was, in their opinion, an entire failure. 'The blow is a stunning one, I suppose'—thus he speaks in his diary—'for I scarcely feel it. . . . I am at sea in the dark, and the vessel leaky, I think, into the bargain. I have suffered terribly, that is the truth, rather in body than in mind, and I often wish I could lie down and sleep without waking. But I will fight it out if I can.' His friends and medical attendants strongly advised him to intermit these severe exertions, which evidently were only a gentle form of self-murder; but they preached to deaf ears. They were equally unsuccessful in their endeavours to keep him back from a county election in which he felt interested. He went—took part in the proceedings—and came to a collision with the populace, which could not but leave distressing effects on one who, on all other points, delighted to stand in kindly relations towards the humbler classes. In the very depth of this dark crisis he began a tale, called *Castle Dangerous*, in which

the failing powers of his mind became even more painfully conspicuous. He was now fully sensible that, in all probability, he had but a short time to live; but it only made him the more eager to work for the acquittance of his great obligations. So much was this the case, that, being at a country-house in Lanarkshire on a short visit, the intelligence of a friend having fallen down suddenly in a fit, from which it was not expected he would recover, caused him instantly to break up his engagement, and go home; answering to all remonstrances on the subject: 'The night cometh when no man may work.'

He was now advised to spend the ensuing winter in Italy; and the government having handsomely placed a ship at his disposal, he sailed for Naples in October, attended by his eldest son and younger daughter. He was most unwilling to leave home, but a long-entertained wish to see some of the continental countries besides France served to reconcile him to the change. The voyage was a pleasant one: he enjoyed the objects to be seen at Malta, so full of middle-age associations, and thought of fictions he could found upon them. On the 17th December, he reached Naples, where everything was done by the king and the best society of the place, including many English, to render his residence happy. His chief companion here was Sir William Gell, an invalid English gentleman, who wrote upon the antiquities of Italy, and with whom Scott at once became extremely intimate. He beheld most of the classical antiquities with indifference—saying only at Pompeii: 'The city of the dead!'—but was keenly interested in any object or document which took his mind into the middle ages. Here he actually wrote a new tale (entitled

The Siege of Malta), and commenced a second, neither of which was deemed by his friends as fit to see the light. For some time he entertained cheerful views about his health; he was also under an impression that his debts were all discharged: it is needless to say that in both particulars he was deceived. Thus about four months rolled on. He then became anxious to return home, and, as he would not obey rule either as to writing or his diet, it was thought best to gratify him, in the hope that a more effectual control might there be exercised.

Attended by his younger son, who had been placed at Naples as an attaché to the embassy there, and by his younger daughter as before, Scott left Naples for Tweedside on the 16th of April. He paused a few weeks at Rome, chiefly to gratify his daughter with the sights, of which, however, he himself also partook, beholding, as before, the medieval antiquities with the greater share of interest. The houses occupied by the dethroned Stuarts, and their tombs in St Peter's, were objects of peculiar interest in his eyes. Here, as at Naples, he was treated by persons of the highest rank, native and foreign, with the greatest respect. Leaving Rome on the 11th of May, he proceeded by Venice, through the Tyrol, to Frankfort, with a haste which must have been unfavourable to him, but which nothing could control. It was soon after necessary for him to have blood let by his servant Nicolson, who had been instructed for that purpose. On the 13th of June he reached London, totally exhausted. It was now evident that this illustrious man was drawing near to the end of a greater journey. He was kept three weeks in London, during which his friends saw in him but occasional

gleams of sense. He never knew distinctly where he was: he knew, however, that he was not at Abbotsford, and there he yearned to be. To gratify him, he was taken to Scotland by sea, and from Edinburgh, as soon as possible, to his own house. As he approached it, he began faintly to recognise familiar objects, and by and by it was found difficult to keep him in the carriage, so greatly was he excited. At length, alighting at the porch, and seeing his steward and friend, he exclaimed: 'Ha, Willie Laidlaw! O man, how often have I thought of you!' His dogs came about his knees, and he sobbed over them until stupor fell again upon him. He remained in the sad state to which he was now reduced for two months. Sometimes the mind cleared a little, and on one occasion he caused himself to be placed at his desk to write, where, however, the fingers failed to grasp the pen, and he sunk back weeping in his chair. More generally he was in a state of slumber. When sensible, he caused the Bible and church services to be read to him. At length, on the 21st of September 1832, the scene was gently closed. Sir Walter died in the sixty-second year of his age—years undoubtedly being cut off from the sum of his existence by that terrible exhaustion consequent on his later literary task-work.

The funeral of this illustrious Scotsman was appointed to take place on Wednesday the 26th; and, preparatory to that melancholy ceremony, about three hundred gentlemen were invited by Major Sir Walter Scott, the eldest son of the deceased. Among the persons thus called upon were many individuals whose acquaintance of Sir Walter Scott was simply of a local character. On an occasion like this, when the most honoured head in the country was to be laid in the grave, it might

have been expected that many individuals would have come of their own accord, especially from the neighbouring capital, to form part in a procession, which, however melancholy, was altogether of a historical character. Considering what the deceased had done for literature —what, more specially, he had done to popularise Scotland, its scenery, traditions, and character—we might not unnaturally have looked for some very marked demonstration of respect, gratitude, and affection. But great events sometimes make less impression at the time than they do many years after: and such was the apathy towards this extraordinary solemnity, that only ten or twelve persons, including the writer of this and his brother William, had come from Edinburgh. It is also a very remarkable circumstance, that, as in ordinary funerals, not nearly the whole of those who had been invited found it convenient to attend.

After a refection in the style usually observed on such occasions, the funeral train set forward to Dryburgh, where the family of the deceased possess a small piece of sepulchral ground, amidst the ruins of the abbey. The spot originally belonged to the Halyburtons of Merton, an ancient and respectable baronial family, of which Sir Walter's paternal grandmother was a member. It is composed simply of the area comprehended by four pillars, in one of the aisles of the ruined building. On a side-wall is the following inscription: 'Sub hoc tumulo jacet JOANNES HALIBURTONUS, Barro de Mertoun, vir religione et virtute clarus, qui obiit 17 die Augusti, 1640;' below which there is a coat of arms. On the back wall, the latter history of the spot is expressed on a small tablet, as follows: 'Hunc locum sepulturæ D. Seneschallus, Buchaniæ comes, GUALTERO,

THOMÆ, et ROBERTO SCOTT, nepotibus Haliburtoni, concessit, 1791.'—That is to say, the Earl of Buchan (lately proprietor of the ruins and adjacent ground) granted this place of sepulture, in 1791, to Walter, Thomas, and Robert Scott, descendants of the Laird of Halyburton. The persons indicated were the father and uncles of Sir Walter Scott; but though all are dead, no other member of the family lies there, besides his uncle Robert and his deceased lady. From the limited dimensions of the place, the body of the author of *Waverley* was placed in a direction north and south, instead of the usual fashion; and thus, in death at least, he has resembled the Cameronians, of whose character he was supposed to have given such an unfavourable picture in one of his tales.

The funeral procession consisted of about sixty vehicles of different kinds, and a few horsemen. It was melancholy at the very first to see the deceased carried out of a house which bore so many marks of his taste, and of which every point, and almost every article of furniture, was so identified with himself. But it was doubly touching to see him carried insensible and inurned through the beautiful scenery, which he has in different ways rendered, from its most majestic to its minutest features, a matter of interest unto all time. There lay the gray and august ruin of Melrose Abbey, whose broken arches he has rebuilt in fancy, and whose deserted aisles he has repeopled with all their former tenants—as lovely in its decay as ever; while he who had given it all its charm was passing by, unconscious of its existence, and never more to behold it. At every successive turn of the way appeared some object which he had either loved because it was the

subject of former song, or rendered delightful by his own—from the Eildon Hills, renowned in the legendary history of Michael Scott—to

> 'Drygrange, with the milk-white yowes,
> 'Twixt Tweed and Leader standing;'

to Cowdenknows, where once spear and helm

> 'Glanced gaily through the broom;'

and so on to the heights above Gladswood, where Smailholm Castle appeared in sight—the scene of his childhood being thus brought, after all the transactions of a mighty and glorious life, into the same prospect with his grave.

During the time of the funeral, all business was suspended at the burgh of Selkirk and the villages of Darnick and Melrose; and in the former of these hamlets several of the signs of the traders were covered with black cloth, while a flag of crape was mounted on the old tower of Darnick, which rears itself in the midst of the inferior buildings. At every side avenue and opening, stood a group of villagers at gaze—few of them bearing the external signs of mourning, but all apparently impressed with a proper sense of the occasion. The village matrons and children, clustered in windows or in lanes, displayed a mingled feeling of sorrow for the loss, and curiosity and wonder for the show. The husbandmen suspended their labour, and leaned pensively over the enclosures. Old infirm people sat out of doors, where some of them, perhaps, were little accustomed to sit, surveying the passing cavalcade. And though the feelings of the gazers had, perhaps, as much reference to the local judge—'the *Shirra*'—as to the poet of the world and of time, the whole had a

striking effect. Those forming the procession, so far as they could abstract themselves from the feeling of the occasion, were also impressed with the extraordinary appearance which it bore, as it dragged its enormous length through the long reaches of the road—the hearse sometimes appearing on a far height, while the rear vehicles were stealing their way through a profound valley or chasm. The sky was appropriately hung, during the whole time of the ceremony, with a thick mass of cloud, which canopied the vale from one end to the other like a pall.

Towards nightfall the procession arrived within the umbrageous precincts of Dryburgh; and the coffin, being taken from the hearse, was borne along in slow and solemn wise through the shady walks, the mourners following to the amount of about three hundred. Before leaving Abbotsford, homage had been done to the religious customs of the country by the pronunciation of a prayer by Dr Baird; the funeral service of the Episcopal Church (to which the deceased belonged) was now read in the usual manner by the Rev. John Williams, Rector of the Edinburgh Academy, and Vicar of Lampeter, whose distinction in literature and in scholarship eminently entitled him to this honour. The scene was at this time worthy of the occasion. In a small green space, surrounded by the broken but picturesque ruins of a Gothic abbey, and overshadowed by wild foliage, just tinged with the melancholy hues of autumn, with mouldering statuary, and broken monuments meeting the eye wherever it attempted to pierce, stood the uncovered group of mourners, amongst whom could be detected but one feeling—a consciousness that the greatest man their country ever produced was here

receiving from them the last attentions that man can pay to his brother man—which, however, in this case, reflected honour, not from the living to the dead, but (and to such a degree!) from the dead to the living. In this scene, where the efforts of man seemed struck with desolation, and those of nature crowned with beauty and triumph, the voice of prayer sounded with peculiar effect; for it is rare that the words of Holy Writ are pronounced in such a scene; and it must be confessed that they can seldom be pronounced over such a 'departed brother.' The grave was worthy of a poet—was worthy of Scott.—And so there he lies, amidst his own loved scenes, awaiting throughout the duration of time the visits of yearly thousands, after which the awakening of eternity, when alone can he be reduced to a level with other men.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE.

In stature, Sir Walter Scott was upwards of six feet, bulky in the upper part of the body, but never inclining in the least to what is called corpulency. His right limb was shrunk from an early period of boyhood, and required to be supported by a staff, which he carried close to the toes, the heel turning a little inwards. The other limb was perfectly sound, but the foot was too long to bring it within the description of handsome. The chest, arms, and shoulders were those of a strong man; but the frame, in its general movements, must have been much enfeebled by his lameness, which was such as to give an ungainly, though not inactive appearance to the figure. The most remarkable part of Sir Walter's person was his head, which was so very tall

and cylindrical as to be quite unique. The measurement of the part below the eyes was fully an inch and a half less than that above, which, both upon the old and the new systems of phrenology, must be held as a striking mark of the intellectuality of his character. In early life, the hair was of a sandy pale colour; but it was changed by his illness in 1819 to a light gray, and latterly had become rather thin. The eyebrows, of the same hue, were so shaggy and prominent, that, when he was reading or writing at a table, they completely shrouded the eyes beneath. The eyes were gray, and somewhat small, surrounded by humorous diverging lines, and possessing the extraordinary property of shutting as much from below as from above, when their possessor was excited by a ludicrous idea. The nose was the least elegant feature, though its effect in a front view was by no means unpleasing. The cheeks were firm and close; and the chin small and undistinguished. The mouth was straight in its general shape, and the lips rather thin. Between the nose and mouth was a considerable space, intersected by a hollow, which gave an air of firmness to the visage. When walking alone, Sir Walter generally kept his eyes bent upon the ground, and had a somewhat abstracted and even repulsive aspect. But when animated by conversation, his countenance became full of pleasant expression. He may be said to have had three principal kinds of aspects: *First*, when totally unexcited, the face was heavy, with sometimes an appearance of vacancy, arising from a habit of drawing the under-lip far into his mouth, as if to facilitate breathing. *Second*, when stirred with some lively thought, the face broke into an agreeable smile, and the eyes twinkled with a peculiarly

droll expression, the result of that elevation of the lower eyelids which has been just noticed. In no portrait is this aspect caught so happily as in that painted near the close of his life by Watson Gordon, no other painter, apparently, having detected the extraordinary muscular movement which occasions the expression. The *third* aspect of Sir Walter Scott was one of a solemn kind, always assumed when he talked of anything which he respected, or for which his good sense informed him that a solemn expression was appropriate. For example, if he had occasion to recite but a single verse of romantic ballad poetry, or if he were informed of any unfortunate occurrence in the least degree concerning the individual addressing him, his visage altered in a moment to an expression of deep veneration or of grave sympathy. The general tone of his mind, however, being decidedly cheerful, the humorous aspect was that in which he most frequently appeared. It remains only to be mentioned, in an account of his personal peculiarities, that his voice was slightly affected by the indistinctness which is so general in the county of Northumberland in pronouncing the letter *r*, and that this was more observable when he spoke in a solemn manner, than on other occasions.

CHARACTER.

The character of Scott has already been indicated in the tenor of his life, and it is not necessary to say much in addition. It certainly included a wonderful amount of the very noblest and most lovable of the qualities of humanity—rarely, perhaps, have so many been combined in one person. The public had a stronger sense

of this in Scott's lifetime than even now, for the revelations made by Mr Lockhart and others regarding his commercial affairs have had the effect of derogating considerably from his reputation. But we venture to predict that this is only a temporary effect. It has damaged the ideal image only; it has not injured the real man. Far better, we would say, to look the actual character in the face, and judge of it from its shadows as well as its lights; then only can we truly appreciate even the worth and goodness of Scott, for then only do we see a bearer of our own nature, charged with a share of its infirmities, as well as of its glories. Admit, for instance, that he erred in his anxiety for wealth; see, on the other hand, what objects he had here in view! There was nothing sordid in this passion of his—the results were mainly used to realise a poetic dream from which others were to derive the substantial benefits. A large share was also devoted without a grudge to solace the unfortunate. Grant, again, that he venerated rank; the feeling was essentially connected with his historic taste. He worshipped not the title or its living bearer; his idol was constituted by the romantic associations which it awoke—and thus he has been known to pay far more practical respect to a poor Highland chieftain than to a modern English peer. It may, in like manner, be admitted that his judgments on passing affairs were obsolete, and they may be excused by a similar reference to his poetic habits. It was the same romance of the brain from which we derived his novels, that misled him on these points.

Sir Walter Scott possessed, in an eminent degree, the power of imagination, with the gift of memory. If to this be added his strong tendency to venerate past

things, we at once have the most obvious features of his intellectual character. A desultory course of reading had brought him into acquaintance with almost all the fictitious literature that existed before his own day, as well as the minutest points of British, and more particularly Scottish history. His easy and familiar habits had also introduced him to an extensive observation of the varieties of human character. His immense memory retained the ideas thus acquired, and his splendid imagination gave them new shape and colour. Thus, his literary character rests almost exclusively upon his power of combining and embellishing past events, and his skill in delineating natural character. In early life, accident threw his exertions into the shape of verse—in later life, into prose; but, in whatever form they appear, the powers are not much different. The same magician is still at work, reawaking the figures and events of history, or sketching the characters which we every day see around us, and investing the whole with the light of a most extraordinary fancy. His versified writings, though replete with good feeling, display neither the high imaginings nor the profound sympathies which are expected in poetry; their charm lies almost entirely in the re-creation of beings long since passed away, or the conception of others who might be supposed to have once existed. As some of the material elements of poetry were thus wanting, it was fortunate that he at last preferred prose as a vehicle for his ideas—a medium of communication in which no more was expected than what he was able or inclined to give, while it afforded a scope for the delineation of familiar character, which was nearly denied in poetry. As the discoverer and successful cultivator of this kind of fictitious writing, Sir

Walter Scott must rank among the very highest names in British literature—Shakspeare, Milton, and Byron being the only others who can be said to stand on the same level.

Among the minor powers of his mind, humour was one of the most prominent. Both in his prose writings and in private conversation, he was perpetually making droll application of some ancient adage, or some snatch of popular literature, or some whimsical anecdote of real life, which he happened to think appropriate to the occasion.* A strong feeling of nationality was another of the features of his character, though perhaps it ought, in some measure, to be identified with his tendency to admire whatever belonged to the past. He loved Scot-

* [For a number of years after the decease of Sir Walter, there were many small floating anecdotes and memorabilia of his habits, and the happy way in which he would make some pleasantry out of very ordinary occurrences. Two or three instances occur to recollection.—One day, when walking along Princes Street, Edinburgh, my brother, who accompanied him, made the remark that he was evidently well known, for many persons looked back at him on passing. 'Oh, ay, ay,' replied Scott jocosely; 'more know Tom Fool than Tom Fool knows!'—The late Mr Thomas Tegg, publisher, Cheapside, having, on the occasion of visiting Scotland, ventured with a friend to call on Sir Walter at Abbotsford, was somewhat doubtful of his reception, for he had published a small book in doggerel verse, designed to bring Scott's muse into ridicule. He was speedily relieved of his apprehensions. 'I am sorry to say,' said Tegg apologetically, 'that I happen to be the publisher of *Jokeby, a Burlesque on Rokeby.*' 'Glad to see you, Mr Tegg,' replied Sir Walter; 'the more jokes the better!'—Mrs John Ballantyne, in her reminiscences of Scott, states that, besides his story-telling manner, he had another quite distinct, in which he was accustomed to utter any snatch of poetry, such as a verse of a Border ballad, or a simple but touching popular rhyme. 'I can never forget,' she says, 'the awe-striking solemnity with which

land and Scotchmen, but, it may be remarked, fully as much with a view to what they were, and what they did long ago, as to their later or present condition. Of the common people, when they came individually before him, it cannot be said that he was a despiser: to them, as to all who came in his way, he was invariably kind and affable. Nevertheless, from the highly aristocratic tone of his mind, he had no affection for the people as a body. He seems to have never conceived the idea of a manly and independent character in middle or humble life; and in his novels, where an individual of these classes is introduced, he is never invested with any virtues, unless obedience, or even servility to superiors, be of the number. Among the features of his character, it would be improper to omit noticing his passion for field-sports, and for all the machinery by which they are carried on. He was so fond of a good horse, that the

he pronounced an elegiac stanza inscribed on a tombstone in Melrose Abbey:

"Earth walketh on the earth
Glistering like gold;
Earth goeth to the earth
Sooner than it wold.
Earth buildeth on the earth
Palaces and towers;
Earth sayeth to the earth,
All shall be ours."'

—On the occasion of an excursion with a friend to Dumfriesshire and Galloway, Scott's money happened to run out; and he borrowed from his companion a pound-note at Tinwald Manse, and two pounds at the inn of Beattock Bridge. The payment of the loan became the subject of a bit of pleasantry. Returning home, he enclosed three pounds to his friend, with the following lines:

'One at Tinwald Manse, and two at Beattock Brig,
That makes three, if Cocker's worth a fig;
Borrow while you may, pay when you can,
And at the last you'll die an honest man!']

present writer has seen him turn the most serious conversation, in order to remark the strength and speed of one of these animals which he saw passing. He has also recorded his attachment to dogs, by being frequently drawn with one by his side.

The gravest charge against Sir Walter Scott lies undeniably in his heedlessness regarding his affairs. Apart altogether from his accommodations to Constable and Company, he had entered deeply into a false system of credit on his own account; and while much debt was consequently hanging over him, he is found transferring the only solid security for it—his estate—to his son. This, however, should be contemplated in connection with all the circumstances which we can suppose to have justified it in his own mind. To one who was producing ten thousand a year by his pen, and who had done so for years, who, moreover, saw large possessions in his own hands, there might appear no pressing reason for looking anxiously into the accounts concerning even so large a sum of floating debt as forty-six thousand pounds; at least to one whose temperament, we now see, was sanguine and ideal as ever poet manifested, though in his case usually veiled under an air of worldly seeming. When this is considered, the weight of the charge will, we think, appear much lessened, though it cannot be altogether done away. For what remains, let us reflect on the latter days of Scott, and surely we must own that never was fault more nobly expiated, or punishment more nobly borne, than by the great Minstrel.

It is by far the greatest glory of Sir Walter Scott, that he shone equally as a good and virtuous man, as he did in his capacity of the first fictitious writer of the age.

His behaviour through life was marked by undeviating integrity and purity, insomuch that no scandalous whisper was ever yet circulated against him. The traditionary recollection of his early life is burdened with no stain of any sort. His character as a husband and father is altogether irreproachable. Indeed, in no single relation of life does it appear that he ever incurred the least blame. His good sense, and good feeling united, appear to have guided him aright through all the difficulties and temptations of life; and, even as a politician, though blamed by many for his exclusive sympathy with the cause of established rule, he was always acknowledged to be too benevolent and too unobtrusive to call for severe censure. Along with the most perfect uprightness of conduct, he was characterised by extraordinary simplicity of manners. He was invariably gracious and kind, and it was impossible ever to detect in his conversation a symptom of his grounding the slightest title to consideration upon his literary fame, or of his even being conscious of it. Of all men living, the most modest, as likewise the greatest and most virtuous, was Sir Walter Scott.

[CONCLUSION.

The vast exertions made by Scott in his latter years to redeem his financial blunders were happily successful. Since his death, the whole of his debts have been cleared off by the profits of his writings. More than a generation has elapsed since his decease, yet the popularity of his works remains unabated. Written to satisfy no temporary feeling, but founded on a knowledge of human character, and ever enduring and

elevating in their tendency, the fictions of Scott do not seem destined to grow old or out of date. From the frantic novel-writing of the period, too commonly the mere rack of invention, with characters and incidents in violation of all known experience, one turns to the fictions of Sir Walter with undiminished, if not increasing, delight and admiration. Mr Cadell's interest in the Waverley Novels having been transferred in 1851 to Messrs A. & C. Black, innumerable editions have since testified the lasting appreciation of these interesting works, to which much justice has certainly been done as regards the method of publication; though, like some others among the original readers of the fictions, we could have spared the explanatory notes of the author, which, with all their merits, are somewhat calculated to destroy the vraisemblance of the respective narratives. A few years after the death of Sir Walter, the citizens of Edinburgh resolved to erect a monument to his memory, and the device adopted was that magnificent Norman cross, from plans of Mr George M. Kemp, placed in so conspicuous a situation in Princes Street as to strike the eye of every passing traveller. It encloses, under open Gothic arches, a marble statue (life-size) of the poet in a sitting posture, by a native artist, Mr John Steell. The monument, which was completed in 1846, is open daily for the inspection of strangers. The cost of the structure has been upwards of £15,000.

There is something sorrowful in the failure of Scott's high hopes of founding a family. The fond dream of his life may be said to have come to nought. He left two sons and two daughters, who did not long survive him. Miss Anne Scott died in London, 25th June 1833.

Sophia, who was married to John Gibson Lockhart, and who, in appearance and character, most resembled her father, died 17th May 1837. Charles Scott, the second son, died, unmarried, while acting as an attaché to a diplomatic embassy to Persia, 28th October 1841. Walter, the eldest son, who succeeded to the baronetcy, and rose to be lieutenant-colonel in the 15th Hussars, died on his passage home from India, 8th February 1847. He was married, but left no issue, and the baronetcy is extinct. Mrs Lockhart had three children, John Hugh Lockhart—the 'Hugh Littlejohn' for whom Scott so lovingly wrote the *Tales of a Grandfather*—who died 15th December 1831; Walter Scott Lockhart, an officer in the army, who died at Versailles, 10th January 1853; and Charlotte Harriet Jane Lockhart, who was married in 1847 to James Robert Hope, barrister, grandson of the Earl of Hopetoun. This lady, the last surviving child of the novelist, died at Edinburgh 26th October 1858. She had three children, two of whom died young, the only survivor being Mary Monica, born 2d October 1852, who is now the only living descendant of Sir Walter Scott. Mrs Hope having, in virtue of inheritance, succeeded to the estate of Abbotsford, assumed with her husband the surname Scott, in addition to that of Hope. Their daughter is accordingly known as Miss Hope-Scott. Mr Hope-Scott, who occupies Abbotsford, was by a second marriage united to a sister of the present Duke of Norfolk, 1861. All Sir Walter Scott's brothers predeceased him. The only one of them who was married was Thomas, who left a son and three daughters.

In the occupancy of Mr Hope-Scott, Abbotsford remains a central point of attraction to tourists, who,

for the purpose of visiting it, and also the mausoleum at Dryburgh, make the village of Melrose the spot to which they first direct their pilgrimage. Carefully preserved in every respect, the mansion of Abbotsford will be found almost in the condition in which it was left by the great Scottish novelist. The lapse of forty years, however, has effected great changes on the grounds. The belts and clumps of plantation, the laying out and thinning of which afforded so much delight to Sir Walter in the days of his prosperity, when accompanied by Tom Purdie or William Laidlaw, have become thick, umbrageous woods, clothing with beauty the once bare hill-sides, and otherwise realising the anticipations of one who fondly watched over their early development. The scene, one of the most admired in the south of Scotland, ought not to be passed over hurriedly. Here, within the murmuring sound of the Tweed, Sir Walter Scott breathed his last, and here is the memorable shrine of his affections.]

ABBOTSFORD NOTANDA

OR

SIR WALTER SCOTT AND HIS FACTOR

BY

ROBERT CARRUTHERS, LL.D.

LOOKING over the correspondence and other papers of my old friend, William Laidlaw, long since deceased, and sleeping at the foot of a Highland hill, far from his beloved Tweedside, it occurred to me that certain portions of the letters and memoranda might possess interest to some readers, and not be without value to future biographers. Mr Laidlaw, it is well known, was factor or steward to Sir Walter Scott at Abbotsford, and also occasional amanuensis. Lockhart has done justice to his gentle, unassuming character, and merits, and to his familiar intercourse with the Great Minstrel. Still, there are domestic details and incidents unrecorded, such as we should rejoice to have concerning Shakspeare at New Place, with his one hundred and seven acres of land in the neighbourhood, or from Horace addressing the bailiff on his Sabine farm. Such personal memorials of great men, if genuine and correct, are seldom complained of, as Gibbon has observed, for their minuteness or prolixity.

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R. C.

INVERNESS.

ABBOTSFORD NOTANDA.

THE death of Mr William Laidlaw, a man of fine natural powers, and of most estimable character, removed another of the few individuals connected directly and confidentially with the daily life and literary history of Sir Walter Scott, and also with the revival of the antique Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border. The loss of Hogg, while the twilight from Scott's departed greatness still shone on the land, was universally regretted; and by the death of Laidlaw, another 'flower of the forest,' less bright, but a genuine product of the soil, was 'wede away.' As the author of one of our sweetest and most characteristic Scottish ballads, *Lucy's Flittin'*, and as a collaborateur with Scott in the collection of the ancient minstrelsy, Laidlaw is entitled to honourable remembrance. Let us never forget those who have added even one wild-rose to the chaplet of Scottish song! It is chiefly, however, as the companion and factor or land-steward of Scott, that William Laidlaw will be known in after-times. During most of those busy and glorious years when Scott was pouring out so prodigally the treasures of his prose fictions, and building up his

baronial romance of Abbotsford, Laidlaw was his confidential adviser and assistant. From 1817 to 1832, he was resident on the poet's estate, and emphatically one of his household friends. Not a shade of distrust or estrangement came between them; and this close connection, notwithstanding a disparity in circumstances and opinions, in fame and worldly consequence, is too honourable to both parties to be readily forgotten. The manly kindness and consideration of one noble nature was paralleled by the affectionate devotion and admiration of another; and literary history is brightened by the rare conjunction.

Scott's early excursions to Liddesdale and Ettrick form one of the most interesting epochs of his life. He was then young, not great, but prosperous, high-spirited, and overflowing with enthusiasm. His appointment as sheriff had procured him confidence and respect. He had given hostages to fortune as a husband and a father, and no one felt more strongly the force and tenderness of those ties. Friends were daily gathering round him; his German studies and ballads inspired visions of literary distinction; and he was full of hope and ambition. In his Border raids, he revelled among the choice and curious stores of Scottish poetry and antiquities. Almost every step in his progress was marked by some memorable deed or plaintive ballad—some martial achievement or fairy superstition. Every tragic tale and family tradition was known to him. The old *peels*, or castles, the bare hills and treeless forest, and solitary streams were all sacred in his eyes. They told of times long past—of warlike feuds and forays—of knights and freebooters, and of primitive manners and customs, fast disappearing, yet embalmed in songs, often rude and

imperfect, but always energetic or tender. Thus, the Border towers, and streams, and rocks were equally dear to him as memorials of feudal valour, and as the scenes of lyric poetry and pastoral tranquillity. He contrasted the strife and violence of the warlike Douglases, the Elliots, and Armstrongs, with the peace and security of later times, when shepherds ranged the silent hill, or Scottish maidens sang ancient songs, and, like the Trojan dames,

'Washed their fair garments in the days of peace.'

Much of this romance was in the scene, but more was in the mind of the beholder.

William Laidlaw's acquaintance with Scott commenced in the autumn of 1802, after two volumes of the *Minstrelsy* had been published, and the editor was making collections for a third. The eldest son of a respectable sheep-farmer, Mr Laidlaw was born at Blackhouse, Selkirkshire, in November 1780. He had received a good education, had a strong bias towards natural history and poetry, was modest and retiring, and of remarkably mild and agreeable manners. The scheme of collecting the old ballads of the Forest was exactly suited to his taste. Burns had filled the whole land with a love of song and poetry, James Hogg was his intimate friend and companion. Hogg had been ten years a shepherd with Mr Laidlaw's father, had taught the younger members of the family their letters, and recited poetry to the old, and was engaged in every *ploy* and pursuit at Blackhouse, the name of the elder Laidlaw's farm.

A solitary and interesting spot is Blackhouse!—a wild extensive sheep-walk, with its complement of traditional

story, and the suitable accompaniment of a ruined tower. The farm lies along the Douglas Burn, a small mountain-stream which falls into the Yarrow about two miles from St Mary's Loch. Near the house, at the foot of a steep, green hill, and surrounded with a belting of trees, is Blackhouse Tower, or the Tower of Douglas, so called, according to tradition, after the Black Douglas, one of whose ancestors, Sir John Douglas of Douglas-burn, as appears from Godscroft's history of the family, sat in Malcolm Canmore's first parliament. The tower has in one corner the remains of a round turret, which contained the stair, and the walls rise in high broken points, which altogether give the ruin a singular and picturesque appearance. It is also the scene of a popular ballad, *The Douglas Tragedy*, in which, as in the old Elizabethan dramas, blood is shed and horrors are accumulated with no sparing hand. A knightly lover, the 'Lord William' of so many ballads, carries off a daughter of Lord Douglas, and is pursued by this puissant noble and his seven sons. All these are slain by Lord William, while the fair betrothed looks on, holding his steed; and the lover himself is mortally wounded in the combat, and dies ere morn. The lady also falls a prey to her grief; and, in the true vein of antique story and legend, we are told

> 'Lord William was buried in St Mary's kirk,
> Lady Margaret in Mary's quire;
> Out o' the lady's grave grew a bonny red rose,
> And out o' the knight's a brier.'

The tower and legend interested Scott as they had done Laidlaw. He listened attentively to the traditionary narrative, and, like the lovers in the ballad,

'He lighted down to take a drink
Of the spring that ran sae clear,'

and visited the seven large stones erected upon the neighbouring heights of Blackhouse to mark the spot where the seven brethren were slain.

Mr Laidlaw was prepared for Scott's mission. He had heard from a Selkirk man in Edinburgh, Mr Andrew Mercer—a Border rhymester, and connected with the *Edinburgh Magazine*—that the sheriff was meditating a poetical raid into Ettrick, accompanied by John Leyden, and he had written down various ballads from the recitation of old women and the singing of the servant-girls. He had also enlisted the Ettrick Shepherd into this special service. The following is one of Hogg's rambling bizarre epistles, which relates chiefly to the ballad of the Outlaw Murray:

'DEAR SIR—I received yours, with the transcript, on the day before St Boswell's Fair' [17th of July], 'and am sorry to say it will not be in my power to procure you manuscripts of the two old ballads, especially as they which Mr Scott hath already collected are so near being published. I was talking to my uncle concerning them, and he tells me they are mostly escaped his memory, and they really are so—in so much, that of the whole long transactions betwixt the Scottish king and Murray, he cannot make above half-a-dozen of stanzas to metre, and these are wretched. He attributed it to James V., but as he can mention no part of the song or tale from whence this is proven, I apprehend, from some expressions, it is much ancienter. Upon the whole, I think the thing worthy of investigation—the more so as he' [Murray of the ballad] 'was the progenitor of a very

respectable family, and seems to have been a man of the utmost boldness and magnanimity. What way he became possessed of Ettrick Forest, or from whom he conquered it, remains to me a mystery. When taken prisoner by the king at Permanscore, above Hanginshaw, where the traces of the encampments are still visible, and pleading the justice of his claim to Ettrick Forest, he hath this remarkable expression:

> "I took it from the Soudan Turk
> When you and your men durstna come see." *

Who the devil was this Soudan Turk? I would be very happy in contributing any assistance in my power to the elucidating the annals of that illustrious and beloved though now decayed house, but I have no means of accession to any information. I imagine the whole manuscript might be procured from some of the connections of the family. Is it not in the library at Philiphaugh? † As to the death of the Baron of Oakwood and his brother-in-law on Yarrow, if Mr Mercer or Mr Scott, or either of them, wisheth to see it poetically described, they might wait until my tragedy is performed at the Theatre-royal; and if that shall never take place, they must sit in darkness and the shadow of

* 'From Soldan Turk I this Forest wan
When the king and his men was not to see.'

In the copy printed in the *Border Minstrelsy*, this is *Soudron*—i. e., Southron or English, which I have no doubt is the proper reading. —*Aytoun.*

† The Shepherd's conjecture proved correct. Mr Aytoun procured his copy of the ballad from the charter-chest at Philiphaugh. The copy in the *Border Minstrelsy* was printed from one found among the papers of Mrs Cockburn, authoress of *The Flowers of the Forest.*

death for what light the poets of Bruce's time can afford them!

'I believe I could get as much from these traditions as to make good songs out of them myself. But without Mr Scott's permission this would be an imposition; neither would I undertake it without an order from him in his own handwriting, as I could not bring my language to bear with my date. As a supplement to his songs, if you please, you may send him the one I sent last to you: it will satisfy him, yea or nay, as to my abilities. Haste; communicate this to him; and ask him if, in his researches, he hath lighted on that of John Armstrong of Gilnockie Hall, as I can procure him a copy of that. My uncle says it happened in the same reign with that of Murray, and if so, I am certain it has been written by the same bard. I could procure Mercer some stories—such as the tragical, though well-authenticated one of the unnatural murder of the son and heir of Sir Robert Scott of Thirlstane, the downfall of the family of Tushilaw, and the horrid spirit that still haunts the Alders. And we might give him that of John Thomson's Aumrie, and the Bogle of Bell's Lakes.

'My muse still lies dormant, and with me must sleep for ever, since a liberal public hath not given me what my sins and mine iniquities deserved.—I am yours for ever. JAMES HOGG.

'*July 20th*, 1801.'

The 'liberal public' had given a reception 'the north side of friendly,' as Bailie Nicol Jarvie says, to a small publication which made its appearance about six months before the date of the above letter, entitled '*Scottish*

Pastorals, Poems, &c., by James Hogg, Farmer at Ettrick '—a most unlucky speculation.

Mr Laidlaw was constantly annoyed, he said, to find how much the affectation and false taste of Allan Ramsay had spoiled or superseded many striking and beautiful old strains of which he got traces and fragments, and how much Scott was too late in beginning his researches, as many aged persons, who had been the bards and depositaries of a former generation, were then gone.

'I heard,' he says, 'from one of our servant-girls, who had all the turn and qualifications for a collector, of a ballad called *Auld Maitland,* that a grandfather of Hogg's could repeat, and she herself had several of the first stanzas (which I took a note of, and have still the copy). This greatly aroused my anxiety to procure the whole, for this was a ballad not even hinted at by Mercer in his list of desiderata received from Mr Scott. I forthwith wrote to Hogg himself, requesting him to endeavour to procure the whole ballad. In a week or two, I received his reply, containing *Auld Maitland* exactly as he had copied it from the recitation of his uncle, Will Laidlaw of Phawhope, corroborated by his mother, who both said they learned it from their father, a still older Will of Phawhope, and an old man called Andrew Muir, who had been servant to the famous Mr Boston, minister of Ettrick.'* These services of the

* MS. notes by W. Laidlaw. Professor Aytoun says that one cause of his doubts as to the antiquity of *Auld Maitland* was that it wanted a clear intelligible story and main plot, so that it could not be retained in memory for a couple of months. If the Professor (alas, now no more!) had chanced, in any of his angling excursions on the Tweed, to have fallen in with a brother of the

olden time were marked by reciprocal kindness and attachment, not unworthy of the patriarchal age. Son succeeded father in tending the *hirsel* or herding the cows, while in the case of 'the master,' the same hereditary or family succession was often preserved.

The person of the sheriff was not unknown to the new friend with whom he was afterwards destined to form so intimate a connection. 'I first saw Walter Scott,' Laidlaw used to relate, 'when the Selkirk troop of yeomanry met to receive their sheriff shortly after his appointment. I was on the right of the rear rank, and my front-rank man was *Archie Park*, a brother of the traveller. Our new sheriff was accompanied by a

rod, Mr Stirling, Depute Sheriff-clerk of Peebles (also now gone), he would have found at least one gentleman who could repeat the whole ballad without a break, though he had not read a line of it for more than twenty years. Hogg states explicitly that when the sheriff visited his cottage at Ettrick, his mother recited or chanted the ballad; and in a poetical address to Scott congratulating him on his elevation to the baronetcy, the Shepherd says:

'When Maitland's song first met your ear,
How the furled visage up did clear,
Beaming delight! though now a shade
Of doubt would darken into dread,
That some unskilled presumptuous arm
Had marred tradition's mighty charm.
Scarce drew thy lurking dread the less
Till she, the ancient Minstreless,
With fervid voice and kindling eye,
And withered arms waving on high,
Sung forth these words in eldritch shriek,
While tears stood on thy nut-brown cheek:

"Na, we are nane o' the lads o' France,
Nor e'er pretend to be;
We be three lads of fair Scotland,
Auld Maitland's sons a' three!"

Thy fist made all the table ring—
"By ——, sir, but that is the thing!"'

friend, and as they retired to the usual station of the inspecting officer previous to the charges, the wonderful *springs* and bounds which Scott made, seemingly in the excitation and gaiety of his heart, joined to the effect of his fine fair face and athletic appearance, were the cause of a general murmur of satisfaction, bordering on applause, which ran through the troop. Archie Park looked over his shoulder to me, and growled, in his deep rough voice: "Will, what a strong chield that would have been if his right leg had been like his left ane!"'

Scott and Leyden duly appeared at Blackhouse, carrying letters of introduction. They put up their horses, and experienced a homely unostentatious hospitality, which afterwards served to heighten the delightful traits of rustic character in the delineation of Dandie Dinmont's home at Charlies-Hope. If the sheriff did not 'shoot a blackcock and eat a blackcock too,' the fault was not in his entertainers. After the party had explored the scenery of the burn, and inspected Douglas Tower, Laidlaw produced his treasure of *Auld Maitland.* Leyden seemed inclined to lay hands on the manuscript, but the sheriff said gravely that *he* would read it. Instantly both Scott and Leyden, from their knowledge of the subject, saw and felt that the ballad was undoubtedly ancient, and their eyes sparkled as they exchanged looks. Scott read with great fluency and emphasis. Leyden was like a roused lion. He paced the room from side to side, clapped his hands, and repeated such expressions as echoed the spirit of hatred to King Edward and the Southrons, or as otherwise struck his fancy. 'I had never before seen anything like this,' said the quiet Laidlaw; 'and, though the sheriff kept his feelings under, he, too, was excited, so

that his *burr* became very perceptible.' The wild Border energy and abruptness are certainly seen in such verses as these :

'As they fared up o'er Lammermore,
They burned baith up and down,
Until they came to a darksome house ;
Some call it Leader-Town.

"Wha hauds this house?" young Edward cried,
"Or wha gies't ower to me?"
A gray-haired knight set up his head,
And crackit right crousely :

"Of Scotland's king I haud my house ;
He pays me meat and fee ;
And I will keep my gude auld house
While my house will keep me."

They laid their sowies to the wall,
Wi' mony a heavy peal ;
But he threw ower to them agen
Baith pitch and tar barrel.

With springalds, stanes, and gads of airn,
Among them fast he threw ;
Till mony of the Englishmen
About the wall he slew.

Full fifteen days that braid host lay,
Sieging auld Maitland keen,
Syne they hae left him, hail and fair,
Within his strength of stane.'

Scott valued this ballad and his other lyrical acquisitions highly. In a letter to Mr Laidlaw, dated 21st January 1803, he remarks as follows : '*Auld Maitland*, laced and embroidered with antique notes and illustrations, makes a most superb figure. I have got, through the intervention of Lady Dalkeith, a copy of Mr Beattie

of Meikledale's *Tamlane.* It contains some highly poetical stanzas descriptive of fairy-land, which, after some hesitation, I have adopted, though they have a very refined and modern cast. I do not suspect Mr Beattie of writing ballads himself; but pray, will you inquire whether, within the memory of man, there has been any poetical clergyman or schoolmaster whom one could suppose capable of giving a coat of modern varnish to this old ballad. What say you to this, for example?

> "We sleep on rose-buds soft and sweet,
> We revel in the stream,
> We wanton lightly on the wind,
> Or glide on a sunbeam."

This seems quite modern, yet I have retained it.'

Laidlaw had procured a version of another ballad, *The Demon Lover*, which he took down from the recitation of Mr Walter Grieve, then in Craik, on Borthwick Water. Grieve sung it well to a singularly wild tune; and the song embodies a popular but striking superstition, such as Lewis introduced into his romance of *The Monk.* To complete the fragment, Laidlaw added the 6th, 12th, 17th, and 18th stanzas; and those who consult the ballad in Scott's *Minstrelsy* will see how well our friend was qualified to excel in the imitation of these strains of the elder muse. After the party had 'quaffed their fill' of old songs and legendary story, they all took horse, and went to dine with Mr Ballantyne of Whitehope, the uncle of Laidlaw.

'There was not a minute of silence,' says Mr Laidlaw's memorandum, 'as we rode down the narrow glen, and over by the way of Dryhope, to get a view of St Mary's Loch and of the Peel or Tower. When we

entered the Hawkshaw-doors, a pass between Blackhouse and Dryhope, where a beautiful view of the lake opens, Leyden, as I expected, was so struck with the scene that he suddenly stopped, sprung from his horse (which he gave to Mr Scott's servant), and stood admiring the fine Alpine prospect. Mr Scott said little; but as this was the first time he had seen St Mary's Loch, doubtless more was passing in his mind than appeared. Often, when returning home with my fishing-rod, had I stopped at this place, and admired the effect of the setting sun and the approaching twilight; and now when I found it admired by those whom I thought likely to judge of and be affected with its beauty, I felt the same sort of pleasure that I experienced when I found that Walter Scott was delighted with Hogg. Had I at that time been gifted with a glimpse—a very slight glimpse—of the second-sight, every word that passed, and they were not few, until we reached Whitehope or Yarrow Church, I should have endeavoured to record. Scott, as all the world knows, was great in conversation; and Leyden was by no means a common person. He had about him that unconquerable energy and restlessness of mind that would have raised him, had he lived, very high among the remarkable men of his native country. I cannot forget the fire with which he repeated, on the Craig-bents, a half-stanza of an irrecoverable ballad—

> "Oh swiftly gar speed the berry-brown steed
> That drinks o' the Teviot clear!"—

which his friend, when finally no brother to it could be found, adopted in the reply of William of Deloraine to the Lady of Branksome.'

The regret that Laidlaw here expresses at having omitted to note down the conversation of his friends is extremely natural, but few men could be less fitted for such a task. He had nothing of Boswell in his mind or character. He wanted both the concentration of purpose and the pliant readiness of talent and power of retention. At Abbotsford he had ample opportunities for keeping such a record, and he was often urged to undertake it. Scott himself on one occasion, after some brilliant company had left the room, remarked half jocularly, that many a one meeting such people, and hearing such talk, would make a very lively and entertaining book of the whole, which might some day be read with interest. Laidlaw instantly felt it necessary to put in a disclaimer. He said he would consider it disreputable in him to take advantage of his position, or of the confidence of private society, and make a journal of the statements and opinions uttered in free and familiar conversation. We may respect the delicacy and sensitiveness of his feelings, but society, collectively, would lose much by the rigid observance of such a rule. The question, we think, should be determined by the nature and quality of the circumstances recorded. It must be a special, not a general case. There is nothing more discreditable in noting down a brilliant thought or interesting fact, than in repeating it in conversation; while to play the part of a gossiping and malicious eavesdropper, is equally a degradation in life and in literature. It would have been detestable (if the idea could for a moment be entertained) for Mr Laidlaw to pry into the domestic details and personal feelings or failings of his illustrious friend at Abbotsford; but we may wish that his pen had been as ready as his ear when Scott ran

over the story of his literary life and opinions, or discriminated the merits of his great contemporaries—when Davy expatiated on the discoveries and delights of natural philosophy—when Miss Edgeworth painted Irish scenes and character—when Moore discoursed of poetry, music, and Byron—when Irving kindled up like a poet in his recollections of American lakes, and woods, and old traditions—when Mackintosh began with the Roman law, and ended in Lochaber—when some septuagenarian related anecdotes of the past—when artists and architects talked of pictures, sculpture, and buildings—or when some accomplished traveller and *savant* opened up the interior of foreign courts and the peculiarities of national manners. Many a wise and witty saying and memorable illustration—the life-blood of the best books—might thus have been preserved, though with occasional *lacunæ* and mistakes; and all are now lost—

'Gone glittering through the dream of things that were'—[1]

and cannot be recalled. Surely society is the worse for the loss of these racy, spontaneous fruits of intellect, study, and observation.

While dinner was getting ready at Whitehope, Laidlaw and Leyden strolled into the neighbouring churchyard of Yarrow, and saw the tomb of Mr Rutherford, the first minister of that parish after the Revolution, and the maternal great-grandfather of Scott. Leyden recited to his companion the ballads of *The Eve of St John* and *Glenfinlas*, which naturally impressed on the hearer a vivid idea of the poetical talents of the sheriff, and Laidlaw felt towards him as towards an old friend. This was increased by Scott's partiality for dogs. He was struck with a very beautiful and powerful greyhound

which followed Laidlaw, and he begged to have a brace of pups from the same dog, saying he had now become a forester, as sheriff of Ettrick, and must have dogs of the true mountain breed. 'This request,' said the other, 'I took no little pains to fulfil. I kept the puppies till they were nearly a year old. My youngest brother, then a boy, took great delight in training them; and the way was this: he took a long pole having a string and a piece of meat fastened to it, and made the dogs run in a circular or oval course. Their eagerness to get the meat gave them, by much practice, great strength in the loins, and singular expertness in turning, besides singular alertness in *mouthing*, for which they were afterwards famous. Scott hunted with them for two years over the mountains of Tweedside and Yarrow, and never dreamed that a hare could escape them. He mentions them in the Introduction to the second canto of *Marmion*—

> "Remember'st thou my greyhounds true?
> O'er holt or hill there never flew,
> From slip or leash there never sprang,
> More fleet of foot, or sure of fang."'

After this visit, Laidlaw doubled his diligence in gathering up fragments of the elder Muse, and the sheriff was profuse in acknowledgments:

'My dear Sir—I am very much obliged to you for your letter and the enclosure. The *Laird o' Logie* is particularly acceptable, as coming near the real history. Carmichael, mentioned in the ballad, was the ancestor of the Earl of Hyndford, and captain of James VI.'s guard, so that the circumstance of the prisoner's being in his custody is highly probable. I will adopt the whole of this ballad instead of the common one

called *Ochiltree*. *Geordie* I have seen before: the ballad is curious, though very rude. *Ormond* may be curious, but is modern. The story of *Confessing the Queen of England* is published by Bishop Percy, so I will neither trouble you about that nor about *Dundee*. "Glendinning" is a wrong reading: the name of the Highland chief who carries off the lady is Glenlyon, one of the Menzieses. Among Hogg's ballads is a curious set of *Lamington* or *Lochinvar*, which I incline to adopt as better than that in the *Minstrelsy*. Who was Katherine Janfarie, the heroine? She could hardly be a damsel of rank, as the estate of Whitebank is an ancient patrimony of the Pringles. I don't know what to make of Cockburn's name, unless it be Perys, the modern Pierce, which is not a common name in Scotland. I am very much interested about the Tushilaw lines, which, from what you mention, must be worth recovering. I forgot to bring with me from Blackhouse your edition of the *Goshawk*, in which were some excellent various readings. I am so anxious to have a complete Scottish *Otterburn*, that I will omit the ballad entirely in the first volume, hoping to recover it in time for insertion in the third. I would myself be well pleased to delay the publication of all three for some time, but the booksellers are mutinous and impatient, as a book is always injured by being long out of print. As to the Liddesdale traditions, I think I am pretty correct, although doubtless much more may be recovered. The truth is that, in these traditions, as you must have observed, old people are usually very positive about their own mode of telling a story, and as uncharitably critical in their observations on those who differ from them.—Yours faithfully,

WALTER SCOTT.'

Before the friends parted, Scott made a note of Hogg's address, and from that time never ceased to take a warm interest in his fortunes. He corresponded with him, and becoming curious to see the poetical Shepherd, made another visit to Blackhouse, for the purpose of getting Laidlaw along with him as guide to Ettrick. The visit was highly agreeable. The sheriff's *bonhomie* and lively conversation had deeply interested his companion, and he rode by his side in a sort of ecstasy as they journeyed again by St Mary's Loch and the green hills of Dryhope, which rise beyond the wide expanse of smooth water. It was a fine summer morning, and the impressions of the day and the scene have been recorded in imperishable verse.* Dryhope Tower, so intimately associated with the memory of Mary Scott, the 'Flower of Yarrow,' made the travellers stop for a brief space; and *Dhu Linn* (where Marjory, the wife of Percy de Cockburn, sat while men were hanging her husband), with Chapelhope and other scenes and ruins famous in Border tradition, deeply interested Scott. At the west end of the Loch of the Lowes, the surrounding mountains close in, in the face of the traveller, apparently preventing all farther egress. At this spot, as Laidlaw was trying to find a safe place where they might cross the marsh through which the infant Yarrow finds its way to the loch, Scott's servant, an English boy, rode up, and, touching his hat, respectfully inquired, with much interest, where the people got their necessaries! This unromantic question, and the *naïveté* of the lad's manner, was a source of great amusement to the sheriff. The day's journey was a favourite theme with Laidlaw. First, after passing the spots we have described, the

* *Marmion*—Introduction to Canto II.

horsemen crossed the ridge of hills that separates the Yarrow from her sister stream. These hills are high and green, but the more lofty parts of the ridge are soft and boggy, and they had often to pick their way, and proceed in single file. Then they followed a foot-track on the side of a long *cleugh* or *hope*, and at last descended towards the Ettrick, where they had in view the level green valley, walled in by high hills of dark green, with here and there gray crags, the church and the old *place* of Ettrick Hall in ruins, embosomed in trees. Scott was somewhat chafed by having left in his bedroom that morning his watch—a valuable gold repeater, presented to him on the occasion of his marriage—and to Laidlaw's ejaculations of delight he sometimes replied quickly: 'A savage enough place—a very savage place.' His good-humour, however, was restored by the novelty of the scenes and the fine clear day, and he broke out with snatches of song, and told endless anecdotes, either new, or better told than ever they were before. The travellers went to dine at Ramseycleugh, where they were sure of a cordial welcome and a good farmer's dinner; and Laidlaw sent off to Blackhouse for the sheriff's watch (which he received next morning), and to Ettrick House for Hogg, that he might come and spend the evening with them. The Shepherd (who then retained all his original simplicity of character) came *to tea*, and he brought with him a bundle of manuscripts, of size enough at least to shew his industry—all of course ballads, and fragments of ballads. The penmanship was executed with more care than Hogg had ever bestowed on anything before. Scott was surprised and pleased with Hogg's appearance, and with the hearty familiarity with which *Jamie*, as he was

called, was received by Laidlaw and the Messrs Bryden of Ramsey-cleugh. Hogg was no less gratified. 'The sheriff of a county in those days,' said Laidlaw, 'was regarded by the class to whom Hogg belonged with much of the fear and respect that their *forbears* looked up to the ancient hereditary sheriffs, who had the power of pit and gallows in their hands; and here Jamie found himself all at once not only the chief object of the sheriff's notice and flattering attention, but actually seated at the same table with him.' Hogg's genius was sufficient passport to the best society. His appearance was also prepossessing. His clear ruddy cheek and sparkling eye spoke of health and vivacity, and he was light and agile in his figure. When a youth, he had a remarkably fine head of long curling brown hair, which he wore coiled up under his bonnet; and on Sundays, when he entered the church and let down his locks, the *lasses* (on whom Jamie always turned an expressive *espièġle* glance) looked towards him with envy and admiration. He doubtless thought of himself as the Gaelic bard did of Allan of Muidart—

> 'And when to old Kilphedar's church
> Came troops of damsels gay,
> Say, came they there for Allan's fame,
> Or came they there to pray?'

Mr Laidlaw thus speaks of the evening at Ramsey-cleugh: 'It required very little of that tact or address in social intercourse for which Mr Scott was afterwards so much distinguished, to put himself and those around him entirely at their ease. In truth, I never afterwards saw him at any time apparently enjoy company so much, or exert himself so greatly—or probably there was no effort at all—in rendering himself actually fascinating;

nor did I ever again spend such a night of merriment. The qualities of Hogg came out every instant, and his unaffected simplicity and fearless frankness both surprised and charmed the sheriff. They were both very good mimics and story-tellers born and bred; and when Scott took to employ his dramatic talent, he soon found he had us all in his power; for every one of us possessed a quick sense of the ludicrous, and perhaps of humour of all kinds. I well recollect how the tears ran down the cheeks of my cousin, George Bryden; and although his brother was more quiet, it was easy to see that he too was delighted. Hogg and I were unbounded laughers when the occasion was good. The best proof of Jamie's enjoyment was, that he never sung a song that blessed night, and it was between two and three o'clock before we parted.'

Next morning, Scott and Laidlaw went, according to promise, to visit Hogg in his low thatched cottage. The situation is fine, and the opposite mountains, from the grand simplicity of their character, may almost be termed sublime. The Shepherd and his aged mother—'Old Margaret Laidlaw,' for she generally went by her maiden name—gave the visitors a hearty welcome. James had sent for a bottle of wine, of which each had to take a glass; and as the exhilarating effects of the previous night had not quite departed, he insisted that they should help him in drinking every drop in the bottle. Had it been a few years earlier in Scott's life, and before he was sheriff of the county, the request would probably have been complied with; but on this occasion the bottle was set aside. The scene was curious and interesting. 'Hogg may be a great poet,' said Scott, 'and, like Allan Ramsay, come to be the

founder of a sort of family.' Hogg's familiarity of address, mingled with fits of deference and respect towards the sheriff, was curiously characteristic. Many years after this, we recollect a gentleman asking Laidlaw about an amusing anecdote told of the Shepherd. Hogg had sagacity enough to detect the authorship of the Waverley novels long before the secret was divulged, and had the volumes as they appeared bound and lettered on the back 'SCOTT'S NOVELS.' His friend discovered this one day when visiting Hogg at Altrive, and, in a dry humorous tone of voice, remarked: 'Jamie, your bookseller must be a stupid fellow to spell *Scots* with two *t*s.' Hogg is said to have rejoined: 'Ah, Watty, I am ower auld a cat to draw that strae before.' Laidlaw laughed immoderately at the story, but observed: 'Jamie never came lower down than *Walter*.' Lockhart, however, appears to think he did occasionally venture on such a descent.

From Hogg's cottage the party proceeded up Rankleburn to see Buccleuch, and inspect the old chapel and mill. They found nothing at the kirk of Buccleuch, and saw only the foundations of the chapel. Scott, however, was in high spirits, and, being a member of the Edinburgh Light Cavalry, and Laidlaw one of the Selkirkshire Yeomanry, they sometimes set off at a gallop—the sheriff leading as in a mimic charge, and shouting: 'Schlachten, meine kinder, schlachten!' Hogg trotted up behind, marvelling at the versatile powers of the 'wonderful *shirra*.' They all dined together with a 'lady of the glen,' Mrs Bryden, Crosslee; and next morning Scott returned to Clovenford Inn, where he resided till he took a lease of the house of Ashestiel.

Amidst these and similar scenes, Walter Scott inhaled

inspiration, and nursed those powers which afterwards astonished the world. The healthy vigour of his mind, and his clear understanding, grew up under such training, and his imagination was thence quickened and moulded. Byron studied amidst the classic scenes of Greece and Italy—Southey and Moore in their libraries, intent on varied knowledge. All the 'shadowy tribes of mind' were known to the metaphysical Coleridge. Wordsworth wandered among the lakes and mountains of Westmoreland, brooding over his poetical and philosophical theories, from which his better genius, in the hour of composition, often extricated him. Scott was in all things the simple, unaffected worshipper of nature and of Scotland. His chivalrous romances sprung from his national predilections; for the warlike deeds of the Border chiefs first fired his fancy, and directed his researches. In these mountain excursions he imbibed that love and veneration of past times which coloured most of his compositions; and human sympathies and solemn reflections were forced upon him by his intercourse with the natives of the hills, and the simple and lonely majesty of the scenes that he visited. These early impressions were never forgotten. Nor could there have been a better nursery for a romantic and national poet. Scholastic and critical studies would have polished his taste and refined his verse; but we might have wanted the strong picturesque vigour—the simple direct energy of the old ballad style—the truth, nature, and observation of a stirring life—all that characterises and endears old Scotland. Scott's destiny was on the whole pre-eminently happy; and when we think of the fate of other great authors—of Spenser composing amidst the savage turbulence of Ireland—of

Shakspeare following a profession which he disliked—of Milton, blind and in danger—Dante in exile—and Tasso and Cervantes in prison—we feel how immeasurably superior was the lot of this noble free-hearted Scotsman, whose genius was the proudest inheritance of his country. 'Think no man happy till he dies,' said the sage. Scott's star became dim, but there was only a short period of darkness, and he never 'bated one jot of heart or hope,' nor lost the friendly and soothing attentions of those he loved. The world's respect and admiration he always possessed.

The *Minstrelsy* appeared complete in the spring of 1803—the first two volumes being then reprinted, and a third volume added, containing the editor's more recent collections. The work was very favourably received: indeed, so valuable a contribution to our native literature had not appeared since the publication of Percy's *Reliques*. And the Introduction is an admirable historical summary, foreshadowing Scott's future triumphs as a prose writer.*

The sheriff made four visits to Blackhouse, the fourth time in company with his attached friend, Mr Skene of Rubislaw. All the party turned out to visit a fox-hunt, a successful one, for the fox was killed; and Mr Skene

* He rarely made corrections on his published works, but there is one alteration worth noting in the opening of this Introduction. In the first edition he says: 'From the remote period when the Roman deity TERMINUS retired behind the ramparts of SEVERUS,' &c. This seemed a little inflated, and also inappropriate, for it represents Terminus as if capable of motion, though the Romans represented the god as wanting legs and arms, to shew that he was immovable; and Scott reduced the illustration to sober historical limits: 'From the remote period when the Roman province was contracted by the ramparts of SEVERUS,' &c.

made a spirited drawing of the scene, including a portrait of old Will Tweedie, the fox-hunter. The visit was closed by the whole party riding to see the wild scenery of the Grey Mare's Tail and Loch Skene, Hogg and Adam Ferguson being of the party. Laidlaw thus writes of the expedition to Moffatdale:

'We proceeded with difficulty up the rocky chasm to reach the foot of the waterfall. The passage which the stream has worn by cutting the opposing rocks of grey-wacke, is rough and dangerous. My brother George and I, both in the prime of youth, and constantly in the habit of climbing, had difficulty in forcing our way, and we felt for Scott's lameness. This, however, was unnecessary. He said he could not perhaps climb so fast as we did, but he advised us to go on, and leave him. This we did, but halted on a projecting point before we descended to the foot of the fall, and looking back, we were struck at seeing the motions of the sheriff's dog *Camp*. The dog was attending anxiously on his master; and when the latter came to a difficult part of the rock, *Camp* would jump down, look up to his master's face, then spring up, lick his master's hand and cheek, jump down again, and look upwards, as if to shew him the way, and encourage him. We were greatly interested with the scene. Mr Scott seemed to depend much on his hands and the great strength of his powerful arms; and he soon fought his way over all obstacles, and joined us at the foot of the Grey Mare's Tail, the name of the cataract.'

This excursion, like most of the others, Scott described in *Marmion* (Introd. to Canto II.) He was apt, on a journey among the hills, especially if the district was new to him, to fall at times into fits of silence, revolving

in his mind, and perhaps throwing into language, the ideas that were suggested at the moment by the landscape; and hence those who had often been his companions knew the origin of many of the beautiful passages in his future works. Of this Laidlaw used to relate one instance. About a mile down Douglas-burn, a small brook falls into it from the Whitehope hills; and at the junction of the streams, at the foot of a bank celebrated in traditionary story, stood the withered remains of what had been a very large old hawthorn tree, that had often engaged the attention of the young men at Blackhouse. Laidlaw on one occasion pointed out to the sheriff its beautiful site and venerable appearance, and asked him if he did not think it might be centuries old, and once a leading object in the landscape. As the district had been famous for game and wild animals, he said there could be little doubt that the red deer had often lain under the shade of the tree, before they ascended to feed on the open hill-tops in the evening. Scott looked on the tree and the green hills, but said nothing. The enthusiastic guide repeated his admiration, and added, that Whitehope-tree was famous for miles around; but still Scott was silent. The subject was then dropped; 'but some years afterwards,' said Laidlaw, 'when the sheriff read to me his manuscript of *Marmion*, I found that Whitehope-tree was not forgotten, and that he had felt all the associations it was calculated to excite.' The description of the thorn is eminently suggestive and beautiful:

> 'The scenes are desert now and bare,
> Where flourished once a Forest fair,
> When these waste glens with copse were lined,
> And peopled with the hart and hind.

Yon Thorn, perchance, whose prickly spears
Have fenced him for three hundred years,
While fell around his green compeers—
Yon lonely Thorn, would he could tell
The changes of his parent dell.' *

We may here notice another poetical scene, the *Bush aboon Traquair*, celebrated in the well-known popular song by Crawford. Burns says that when he saw the old bush in 1787, it was composed of eight or nine ragged birches, and that the Earl of Traquair had planted a clump of trees near the place, which he called 'The New Bush.' Laidlaw maintained that the new bush was in reality the old bush of the song. One of the sons of Murray of Philiphaugh used to come over often on foot, and meet one of the ladies of Traquair at the *Cless*, a green hollow at the foot of the hill that overhangs Traquair House. This was the scene of the song. The straggling birches that Burns saw are half a mile up the water, the remains of a wooded bog—out of sight of Traquair House, to be sure, but far out of the way between Hanginshaw, on the Yarrow, and Traquair.

One morning in autumn 1804 was vividly impressed on the recollection of Laidlaw; for Scott then recited to him nearly the whole of the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, as they journeyed together in the sheriff's gig up Gala Water. The wild, irregular structure of the poem, the description of the old minstrel, the goblin machinery, the ballads interspersed throughout the tale, and the exquisite forest scenes (the Paradise of Ettrick), all

* *Marmion:* Introd. to Canto II. When the poem was published, its author wrote to his friend at Blackhouse: 'This accompanies a copy of *Marmion*, which I will see put up with my own eyes. Constable is greatly too busy to be uniformly accurate.'

entranced the listener. Now and then, Scott would stop to tell an anecdote of the country they were passing through, and afterwards, in his deep *serious* voice, resume his recitation of the poem. Laidlaw had, the night before, gone to Lasswade, where the sheriff then resided in a beautiful cottage on the banks of the Esk; and on the following morning, after breakfast, they went up the Gala, when Scott poured forth what truly seemed to be an unpremeditated lay. They returned about sunset, and found the sheriff's young and beautiful wife looking on at the few shearers engaged in cutting down their crop in a field adjoining the cottage. Mrs Scott seemed to Laidlaw a 'lovely and interesting creature,' and the sheriff met her with undisguised tenderness and affection. This was indeed his golden prime:

'How happily the days of Thalaba went by!'

After this period, Laidlaw commenced householder, entering on extensive farming experiments; and, so long as the war lasted and high prices prevailed, his schemes promised to be ultimately successful. But with peace came a sudden fall in the market value of corn. He struggled on with adverse circumstances for a twelvemonth, till capital and credit failed, and he was obliged to abandon his lease.

In the summer of 1817, we find him at Kaeside, on the estate of Abbotsford. At first, this seemed a temporary arrangement. The two friends had kept up a constant intercourse after Scott's visit to the Yarrow in 1802. Presents of trout and blackcock from the country, and return presents of books from Castle Street, in Edinburgh, were interchanged; and, when Laidlaw's evil day was at hand, Scott said: 'Come to

Abbotsford, and help me with my improvements. I can put you into a house on the estate—Kaeside—and get you some literary work from the Edinburgh publishers.' The offer was cheerfully accepted, and the connection became permanent. Scott had then commenced building and planting on a large scale; and the same year he made his most extensive purchase—the lands of Toftfield, for which he gave £10,000.

'I have more than once—such was his modesty'—said Laidlaw, 'heard Sir Walter assert that had his father left him an estate of £500 or £600 a year, he would have spent his time in miscellaneous reading, not writing. This, to a certain extent, might have been the case; and had he purchased the property of Broadmeadows, in Yarrow, as he at one time was very anxious to do, and when the neighbourhood was in the possession of independent proprietors, the effect might have been the same. At Abbotsford, surrounded by little lairds, most of them ready to sell their lands as soon as he had money to advance, the impulse to exertion was incessant; for the desire to possess and to add increased with every new acquisition, until it became a passion of no small power. Then came the hope to be a large landed proprietor, and to found a family.'

When the poet was in Edinburgh attending to his official duties as Clerk of Session, he sighed for Abbotsford and the country, and took the liveliest interest in all that was going on under the superintendence of his friend. Passages like the following remind us of the writings of Gilpin and Price on forest and picturesque scenery:

'George must stick in a few wild-roses, honeysuckles, and sweet-briers in suitable places, so as to produce the

luxuriance we see in the woods which Nature plants herself. We injure the effect of our plantings, so far as beauty is concerned, very much by neglecting underwood. . . . I want to know how you are forming your glades of hard wood. Try to make them come handsomely in contact with each other, which you can only do by looking at a distance on the spot, then and there shutting your eyes as you have done when a child looking at the fire, and forming an idea of the same landscape with glades of woodland crossing it. Get out of your ideas about expense. It is, after all, but throwing away the price of the planting. If I were to buy a picture worth £500, nobody would wonder much. Now, if I choose to lay out £100 or £200 to make a landscape of my estate hereafter, and add so much more to its value, I certainly don't do a more foolish thing. I mention this, that you may not feel limited so much as you might in other cases by the exact attention to pounds, shillings, and pence, but consider the whole on a liberal scale. We are too apt to consider plantations as a subject of the closest economy, whereas beauty and taste have even a marketable value after the effects come to be visible. Don't dot the plantations with small patches of hard wood, and always consider the ultimate effect.'

It is pleasant to see from the Laidlaw manuscripts with what alacrity and zeal the noble friends of the poet came forward with kindly contributions. The Duke of Buccleuch sent bushels of acorns; the Earl of Fife presented seed of Norway pines; Lord Montagu forwarded a box of acorns and a packet of lime-seed. One arboricultural missive to the factor says: 'I send the seeds of the Corsican pine, got with great difficulty,

and also two or three of an unknown species which grows to a great height on the Apennines. Dr Graham says they should be raised in mould, finely prepared, under glass, but without artificial heat.' A box of fine chestnuts came from Lisbon: the box was sent on from Edinburgh to Abbotsford unopened, and before Laidlaw heard of them, the chestnuts were peeled, and rendered useless for planting. 'Confound the chestnuts, and those who peeled them!' exclaimed Scott; 'the officious blockheads did it by way of special favour.' One object was to form at the top of the dikes an impenetrable copse or natural hedge or verdurous screen—the poet uses all the epithets (Milton has 'verdurous wall'); and for this purpose there were sent from Edinburgh 3000 laburnums, 2000 sweet-briers, 3000 Scotch elms, 3000 horse-chestnuts, loads of hollies, poplars for the marshy ground, and filberts for the glen. The graceful birch-tree, 'the lady of the wood,' was not, of course, neglected. 'I am so fond of the birch,' writes the poet; 'and it makes such a beautiful and characteristic underwood, that I think we can hardly have too many. Besides, we may plant them as hedges.' He purchased at this time about 100,000 birches. Mr Morritt of Rokeby writes to a friend: 'He (Scott) tells me he never was so happy in his life as in having a place of his own to create. In this Caledonian Eden, he labours all day with his own hands; though, since the Fall, he and his wife will not find many luxuriant branches to prune in Ettrick Forest. I sent him a bushel of Yorkshire acorns, which, except docks and thistles, are, I believe, likely to be in three years the largest vegetables upon the domain.'*

'There are many little jobs about the walks,' writes

* Letter to Hon. Mrs Stewart Mackenzie.

the busy and happy laird, 'which, though Tom Purdie contemns them, are not less necessary towards comfort: a seat or two, for example, and covering any drains, so as to let the pony pass. In the front of the old Rispylaw (now Anne's Hill) is an old quarry, which, a little made up and accommodated with stone seats and some earth to grow a few honeysuckles and sweet-briers, would make a very sweet place. Many of the walks will *thole*' [bear] 'a mending; for instance, that to the thicket might be completely gravelled, as Mrs Scott uses it so much.'

Here the kindly, loving nature of the man peeps out. To Tom himself, Scott writes in a big, plain, round hand:

'As Mrs Scott comes out on the 22d, and brings some plants to cover the paling of the court, you must have a border of about a spade's breadth and a spade's depth dug nicely, and made up with good earth and a little dung, all along in front of the paling, and along the east end of it. She will bring the plants from Edinburgh, so they can be put into the ground the evening she arrives.'

Afterwards, as years ran on, a thread of business was intermixed with the rural pleasure. The poet began to calculate on the probable return from the woods, not omitting the value of the bark used for tanning purposes.

'DEAR WILLIE—How could you be such a *gowk*' [fool] 'as to suppose I meant to start a hare upon you by my special inquiries about the bark? I am perfectly sensible you take more care of my affairs than you would of your own; but anything about wood or trees amuses me, and I like to enter into it more particularly

than into ordinary farming operations. In particular, this of drying and selling our bark—at present a trifle—is a thing which will one day be of great consequence, and I wish to attend to the details myself. I think it should not be laid on the ground, but dried upon stools made of the felled wood; and if you lay along these stools the peeled trees, and pile the bark on them, it will hide the former from the sun, and suffer them to dry gradually. I have been observing this at Blair-Adam. I have got a new light on larch-planting from the Duke of Athole's operations. He never plants closer than eight feet, and says they answer admirably. If this be so, it will be easy to plant our hill-ground. Respecting the grass in the plantations, I have some fears of the scythe, and should prefer getting a host of women with their hooks, which would also be a good thing for the poor folks.' [Another touch of the poet's kindly nature.] 'Tom must set about it instantly. He is too much frightened for the expense of doing things rapidly, as if it were not as cheap to employ twelve men for a week as six men for a fortnight.—Yours,

W. S.'

In the matter of dwellings for the small tenants and labourers, the laird of Abbotsford was equally careful and considerate. 'I think stone partitions would be desirable on account of vermin, &c. If their houses are not comfortable, the people will never be cleanly. For windows I would much prefer the cast-iron lattices, turning on a centre, and not made too large. These windows being in small quarrels, or panes, a little breach is easily repaired, and saves the substitute of a hat or clout through a large hole. Certainly the cottages

should be rough-plastered.' Perhaps the little iron lattices were as much preferred for their antique, picturesque associations as for their utility—'something poetical,' as Pope's old gardener said of the drooping willow; and the aged minstrel's hut near Newark Tower, it will be recollected, had such a window:

> 'The little garden hedged with green,
> A cheerful hearth and lattice clean.'

When times were hard and winter severe, he thought of the firesides of the labourers:

'DEAR SIR—I have your letter, and have no doubt in my own mind that a voluntary assessment is the best mode of raising money to procure work for the present sufferers, because I see no other way of making this necessary tax fall equally upon the heritors. . . . I shall soon have money, so that if you can devise any mode by which hands can be beneficially employed at Abbotsford, I could turn £50 or £100 extra into that service in the course of a fortnight. In fact, if it made the poor and industrious people a little easier, I should have more pleasure in it than in any money I ever spent in my life.—Yours, very truly, W. S.'

The same year, which was a period of some excitement and discontent, he writes to Laidlaw:

'I am glad you have got some provision for the poor. They are the minors of the state, and especially to be looked after; and I believe the best way to prevent discontent is to keep their minds moderately easy as to their own provision. The sensible part of them may probably have judgment enough to see that they could get nothing much better for their class in general by an

appeal to force, by which, indeed, if successful, ambitious individuals might rise to distinction, but which would, after much misery, leave the body of the people just where it found them, or rather much worse. . . . Political publications must always be caricatures. As for the mob of great cities, whom you accuse me of despising too much, I think it is impossible to err on that side. They are the very *riddlings* of society, in which every useful cinder is, by various processes, withdrawn, and nothing left but dust, ashes, and filth. Mind, I mean the mob of cities, not the lowest people in the country, who often, and, indeed, usually, have both character and intelligence.'

Again:

'I think of my books amongst this snow-storm; also of the birds, and not a little of the poor. For benefit of the former, I hope Peggy throws out the crumbs; and a corn-sheaf or two for the game would be to purpose, if placed where poachers could not come at them. For the poor people, I wish you to distribute five pounds or so among the neighbouring poor who may be in distress, and see that our own folks are tolerably off.'

Scott introduced his friendly factor to *Blackwood's Magazine*, and Laidlaw used to compile for it a monthly chronicle of events, besides occasionally contributing a descriptive article, which the 'Great Magician' overhauled previous to its transmission. There was, in the autumn of 1817, a great combustion in Edinburgh about the *Chaldee Manuscript*, inserted in the magazine for October. An edition of two thousand copies was soon sold, and fifteen hundred more were printed; so Blackwood writes to Scott. 'He was dreadfully afraid,' says Laidlaw, 'that Mr Scott would be offended; and so he

would, he says, were it not on my account.' The Ettrick Shepherd (who was the original concocter of the satire) was also alarmed. 'For the love of God, open not your mouth about the *Chaldee Manuscript*,' he writes to Laidlaw. 'There have been meetings and proposals, and an express has arrived from Edinburgh to me. Deny all knowledge, else, they say, I am ruined,' &c. This once famous production is so local and personal that, although it is now included in Professor Wilson's works, it is almost unknown to the present generation. The subject is a bookseller's quarrel, a contest between the rival magazines of Blackwood and Constable, and it is one of the most harmless of all the parodies couched in Scriptural phraseology. Professor Ferrier, the editor of Wilson's works, says it is quite as good, in its way, as Swift's *Battle of the Books;* but this is a monstrous delusion. There are some quaint touches of character in the piece. It may be compared to the parodies by Hone; but it is a sort of profanation to place it on a level with the classic satire of Swift.

It is never too late to do justice. In one of these magazine missives, written in January 1818, Blackwood refers to the Ettrick Shepherd. 'If you see Hogg, I hope you will press him to send me instantly his *Shepherd's Dog*, and anything else. I received his *Andrew Gemmells;* but the editor is not going to insert it in this number.' [Had Ebony really an editor, or was he not himself the great sublime?] 'I expected to have received from him the conclusion of the *Brownie of Bodsbeck;* there are six sheets of it already printed.'

Now, the latter part of this extract seems distinctly to disprove a charge which Hogg thoughtlessly brought

against Mr Blackwood. His novel, the *Brownie of Bodsbeck*, was published in 1818, and he suffered unjustly, as he states in his autobiography, with regard to that tale, as it was looked upon as an imitation of Scott's *Old Mortality*. It was wholly owing to Blackwood, he asserts, that his story was not published a year sooner; and he relates the case as a warning to authors never to intrust booksellers with their manuscripts. But the fact is, *Old Mortality* was published in December 1816; and we have Blackwood, in the above letter to Laidlaw, stating that he had not, in January 1818—more than a twelvemonth afterwards—received the whole of the 'copy' of the *Brownie of Bodsbeck*. How could he go to press with an unfinished story? How make bricks without straw? The accusation is altogether a myth, or, to use one of the Shepherd's own expressions, 'a mere shimmera' [chimera] 'of the brain.'

Of Hogg's prose works, Scott writes: 'Truly, they are sad daubing, with, here and there, fine dashes of genius.' The *daubing* is chiefly seen in the dialogues and attempts at humour; the *genius* appears in the descriptions of pastoral or wild scenery, as in the account of the 'Storms,' and in the fine introduction to the *Brownie of Bodsbeck*, and in some of the delineations of humble Scottish life and superstition. Hogg is as true and literal as Crabbe. His peasants always speak and think as peasants; but he gives us, sometimes, coarse and poor specimens. It is certain, however, that, even in the worst of his stories, there are gleams of fancy—'fairy blinks of the sun'—far above the reach of writers immensely his superiors in taste and acquirements.

There was another person in whom Scott was interested with reference to the slashing articles in

Blackwood's Magazine. He writes to Laidlaw: 'So they let poor Charles Sharpe alone, they may satirise all Edinburgh, your humble servant not excepted.' Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, with his antiquarian tastes, personal oddities, and aristocratic leanings, was a special favourite with Scott. He was a kind of Scotch Horace Walpole (so considered by his illustrious friend), but much feebler; perhaps stronger with the pencil, but infinitely weaker with the pen. His celebrated sketch of the 'Inimitable Virago,' or Queen Elizabeth dancing *disposedly*, as described by the Scotch ambassador, Sir James Melville, was esteemed by Scott as an unrivalled production. It is highly ludicrous and effective as a picture, but is too extravagant to serve even as a caricature representation of Elizabeth. Neither face nor figure has any resemblance. Hogarth, in his etching of old Simon Lord Lovat of the '45, seems, by a happy stroke of genius, to have hit the true medium in works of this class. He preserved the strong points in personal appearance and character—combining them with irresistible humour and drollery of expression.

Here is another scrap:

'I am glad to send you Maga, which continues to be clever. I hope for two or three happy days on the brae-sides about the birthday' [the king's birthday, June 4]. 'Blackwood has been assaulted by a fellow who came from Glasgow on purpose, and returned second-best. The bibliopole is like the little French lawyer, who never found out he could fight till he was put to it, and was then for cudgelling all and sundry. You never saw anything so whimsical.

'I think often, of course, about my walks; and I am sickening to descend into the glen at the little waterfall

by steps. We could cut excellent ones out where the quarry has been. It is the only way we shall ever make what Tom Purdie calls a *neat job;* for a deep descent will be ugly, and difficult to keep. I would plant betwixt the stair and the cascade, so as to hide the latter till you came down to the bottom.'

Visitors now began to appear at Abbotsford, an increasing stream every season from 1817 to 1825. They consisted of persons of rank and fashion, literary men and artists of all nations, who travelled to the Tweed to pay homage to the poet. There was no envy or jealousy with the Great Minstrel. Indeed, with the single exception of Byron, his position was such that he had no cause to fear any rival, and he could afford to throw largess to the crowd. All were welcome at Abbotsford. Washington Irving has described the cordial reception he experienced on the occasion of his visit in 1817, and Laidlaw thus notes the event:

'We had a long walk up by the glen and round by the loch. It was fine sunshine when we set out, but we met with tremendous dashing showers. Mr Irving told me he had a kind of devotional reverence for Scotland, and most of all for its poetry. He looked upon it as fairy-land, and he was beyond measure surprised at Mr Scott, his simple manners and brotherly frankness. He was very anxious to see Hogg, and said that several editions of Hogg's different poems had been published in America.'

Irving always regretted that he had not met with the Shepherd. Such a meeting could not have failed to give infinite pleasure to both. The gentle manners and literary enthusiasm of the American author would at once have attached the Shepherd; while the rustic

frankness, liveliness, and perfect originality of Hogg possessed an indescribable attraction and charm which the other would have fully appreciated. Many years after this period, Hogg retained a careless brightness of conversation and joyous manner which were seen in no other man. The union of the shepherd and the poet formed a combination as rare and striking as that of the soldado with the divinity student of Marischal College, in the person of the renowned Dugald Dalgetty.

One day, after Hogg had been in London—and 'The Hogg,' as Lockhart said, 'was the lion of the season'—Allan Cunningham chanced to meet James Smith of the *Rejected Addresses* at the table of the great bibliopole, John Murray. 'How,' said Smith, aloud, to Allan, 'how does Hogg like Scotland's small cheer after the luxury of London?' 'Small cheer!' echoed Allan; 'he has the finest trout in the Yarrow, the finest lambs on its braes, the finest grouse on its hills, and, besides, he as good as keeps a *sma' still*' [smuggled whisky]. 'Pray, what better luxury can London offer?' All these sumptuosities the Shepherd cheerfully shared with the wayfarers who flocked to Altrive Cottage.

Another visitor at Abbotsford during the season of 1817, was Lady Byron. 'I have had the honour,' says Laidlaw, 'of dining in the company of Lady Byron and Lord Somerville. Her ladyship is a beautiful little woman with fair hair, a fine complexion, and rather large blue eyes; face not round. She looked steadily grave, and seldom smiled. I thought her mouth indicated great firmness, or rather obstinacy. Miss Anne Scott and Lady Byron rode to Newark.' After the date of this visit by Lady Byron, Laidlaw says he had many conversations with Scott concerning the life and poetry

of Byron. 'He seemed to regret very much that Byron and he had not been thrown more together. He felt the influence he had over his great contemporary's mind, and said there was so much in it that was very good and very elevated, that any one whom he much liked could, as he (Scott) thought, have withdrawn him from many of his errors.'

All went on smoothly and gaily at Abbotsford. Every year had added to the beauty of the poet's domain, and to the richness of his various collections and library. His opinion of Gothic architecture is thus expressed: 'I have got a very good plan from Atkinson for my addition, but I do not like the outside, which is modern Gothic, a style I hold to be equally false and foolish. Blore and I have been at work to *Scotify* it, by turning battlements into bartisans, and so on. I think we have struck out a picturesque, appropriate, and entirely new line of architecture.' Abbotsford must certainly be considered picturesque, but it is a somewhat incongruous, ill-placed pile; and without the beautiful garden-screen in front, the general effect would be heavy.

In the Waverley Novels, then appearing in that marvellously rapid succession which astonished the world, there was an ample reservoir of wealth, if it had been wisely secured, as well as of fame. But an alarming interruption was threatened by the illness of the novelist. His malady—cramp of the stomach, with jaundice—was attended with exquisite pain; but in the intervals of comparative ease his literary labours were continued; and it certainly is an extraordinary fact in literary history that under such circumstances the greater part of the *Bride of Lammermoor*, the whole of the *Legend of Montrose*, and almost the whole of *Ivanhoe*

were produced. The novelist lay on a sofa, dictating to John Ballantyne or to Laidlaw; chiefly to the latter, as he was always at hand, whereas Ballantyne was only an occasional visitor at Abbotsford. Sometimes, in his most humorous or elevated scenes, Scott would break off with a groan of torture, as the cramp seized him, but when the visitation had passed, he was ever ready gaily to take up the broken thread of his narrative and proceed *currente calamo*. It was evident to Laidlaw that before he arrived at Abbotsford (generally about ten o'clock) the novelist had arranged his scenes for the day, and settled in his mind the course of the narrative. The *language* was left to the inspiration of the moment; there was no picking of words, no studied *curiosa felicitas* of expression. Even the imagery seemed spontaneous. Laidlaw abjured with some warmth the old-wife exclamations which Lockhart ascribes to him—as, 'Gude keep us a'!'—'The like o' that!'—'Eh, sirs! eh, sirs!' But he admitted that while he held the pen he was at times so deeply interested in the scene or in the development of the plot, that he could not help exclaiming: 'Get on, Mr Scott, get on!' on which the novelist would reply, smiling: 'Softly, Willie; you know I have to make the story,' or some good-humoured remark of a similar purport. It was quite true, he said, that when dictating some of the animated scenes and dialogues in *Ivanhoe*, Scott would rise from his seat and act the scene with every suitable accompaniment of tone, gesture, and manner. Both the military and dramatic spirit were strong in him—too strong even for the cramp and calomel! The postscript to a short business letter from Edinburgh, June 14, 1819, refers to this business of dictation. 'Put your fingers in order, and buy yourself

pens!—I won't *stand* the expense of your quills, so pluck the goose 'a God's name!' And it was plucked on this occasion to record the sorrows of the Bride of Lammermoor.

According to Mr Laidlaw, Scott did not like to speak about his novels after they were published, but was fond of canvassing the merits and peculiarities of the characters while he was engaged in the composition of the story. 'He was peculiarly anxious,' says Laidlaw, 'respecting the success of Rebecca in *Ivanhoe*. One morning, as we were walking in the woods after our forenoon's labour, I expressed my admiration of the character, and, after a short pause, he broke out with: "Well, I think I shall make something of my Jewess." Latterly, he seemed to indulge in a retrospect of the useful effect of his labours. In one of these serious moods, I remarked that one circumstance of the highest interest might and ought to yield him very great satisfaction—namely, that his narratives were the best of all reading for young people. I had found that even his friend Miss Edgeworth had not such power in engaging attention. His novels had the power, beyond any other writings, of arousing the better passions and finer feelings; and the moral effect of all this, I added, when one looks forward to several generations—every one acting upon another—must be immense. I well recollect the place where we were walking at this time—on the road returning from the hill towards Abbotsford. Sir Walter was silent for a minute or two, but I observed his eyes filled with tears. . . . I never saw him much elated or excited in composition but one morning, out of doors, when he was composing that simple but humorous song, *Donald Caird*. I watched him limping along at good

five miles an hour along the ridge or sky-line opposite Kaeside, and when he came in, he recited to me the fruits of his walk. His memory was an inexhaustible repertory, so that Hogg, in his moments of super-exaltation and vanity, used to say that if he had the *shirra's* memory he would beat him as a poet!'

The memory of Sir Walter Scott was vast, but inexact. In this respect he was inferior to Macaulay or Sir James Mackintosh. In quoting poetry, Sir Walter was seldom verbally correct, and sometimes the harmony of the verse suffered. The two famous lines of Milton's *Comus:*

> 'The aery tongues that syllable men's names,
> On sands, and shores, and desert wildernesses,'

are thus given in the *Letters on Demonology:*

> 'The aery tongues that syllable men's names,
> On shores, in desert sands, and wildernesses.'

Thomas Campbell used to relate, as an instance of Sir Walter's extraordinary memory, that he read to him his poem of *Locheil's Warning* before it was printed; after which his friend asked permission to read it himself. He then perused the manuscript slowly and distinctly, and on returning it to its author, said: 'Campbell, look after your copyright, for I have got your poem.' And he repeated, with very few mistakes, the whole sixty lines of which the poem (which was subsequently enlarged) then consisted.

Hogg was generally exalted and buoyant enough. On one occasion we find him writing to Laidlaw: 'I rode through the whole of Edinburgh yesterday in a barouche by myself, having four horses and two postillions! Never was there a poet went through it before

in such style since the world began!' We may exclaim with Johnson on the amount of Goldsmith's debts, 'Was ever poet so trusted before!'

In the midst of his business details and directions, Scott's peculiar humour and felicity of illustration are perpetually breaking out. Of a neighbouring county magnate he says: 'I have heard of a Christian being a Jew, but our friend is the essence of a whole synagogue.' His relation of the simplest occurrence is vivid and characteristic. A high wind in Edinburgh, in January 1818, he thus notices: 'I had more than an anxious thought about you all during the gale of wind. The Gothic pinnacles were blown from the top of Bishop Sandford's Episcopal chapel at the end of Princes Street, and broke through the roof and flooring, doing great damage. This was sticking the horns of the mitre into the belly of the church. The devil never so well deserved the title of Prince of the power of the air, since he has blown down this handsome church, and left the ugly mass of new building standing on the North Bridge.' One incidental remark illustrates the deception men often practise on themselves: 'I have not,' he says, 'a head for accounts, and detest debt. When I find expense too great, I strike sail, and diminish future outlay, which is the only principle for careless accountants to act upon.' Happy would it have been for him if his practice had corresponded with his theory!

The year 1820 was, in the family calendar of the poet, one of peculiar interest and importance. It was the year in which his eldest daughter was married; the year in which he received the honour of the baronetcy; and the year in which he sat to Chantrey for his bust—that admirable work of art which has made

his features familiar in every quarter of the globe. He sat also this year to Sir Thomas Lawrence. 'The king,' he writes, 'has commanded me to sit to Sir Thomas Lawrence for a portrait, for his most sacred apartment. I want to have in *Maida*' [his favourite deer-hound], 'that there may be one handsome fellow of the party.' Late in life, Sir Walter sat to Lawrence Macdonald the sculptor, and Laidlaw says of the artist and his work:

'We were much pleased with some days of Macdonald the sculptor, who modelled Sir Walter while he was dictating to me. Macdonald's model was in a higher style of art than Chantrey's, and from that cause, had not so much character. Macdonald confessed this was not so much his object. It was a faithful likeness, nevertheless, but not so familiar. For the same reason, he would not take the exact figure of the head, which is irregular. Chantrey likewise declined to shew this, which the phrenologists will probably regret.'

Mr Lawrence Macdonald still lives to delight his friends, and pursue his art in Rome, where he has long resided. He has no recollection of the 'irregularity,' referred to. Laidlaw knew nothing of art, and by 'high style,' he probably meant an idealised likeness—a look to 'elevate and surprise.' The extreme length of the upper lip was a personal characteristic of Sir Walter, which he was glad to see artists reduce, and which none of the portraits fully represents. It is by no means uncommmon among the stalwart men of the Border, but is unquestionably a defect as respects personal appearance. The Stratford bust of Shakspeare, it will be recollected, has the same long upper lip, as well as the memorable high forehead, that distinguished Scott. Of Chantrey, Laidlaw writes:

'I met at breakfast Chantrey the sculptor, a real blunt, spirited, fine Yorkshireman, with great good-humour, and an energy of character about him that would have made his fortune—and a great one—had he gone to London as a tailor. He killed a fine salmon in the Tweed, and led another a long time, but let it go among the great stones and cut his line. Colonel Ferguson said he believed he would rather have given his best statue than lost the fish.'

Chantrey was an enthusiastic angler.

The baronetcy was a step of rank which Sir Walter said was the king's own free motion, and none of his seeking. To a lady whom he highly esteemed—the late Hon. Mrs Stewart Mackenzie of Seaforth—he wrote:

'The circumstance of my children being heirs to their uncle's fortune, relieved me in a great degree of the chief objection to accepting with gratitude what was so graciously offered, namely, that which arose from a more limited income than becomes even the lowest step of hereditary rank. . . . Mr Lockhart, to whom Sophia is now married, is the husband of her choice. He is a man of excellent talents, master of his pen and of his pencil, handsome in person, and well-mannered, though wanting that ease which the *usage du monde* alone can give. I like him very much; for having no son who promises to take a literary turn, it is of importance to me, both in point of comfort and otherwise, to have some such intimate friend and relation, whose pursuits and habits are similar to my own—so that, upon the whole, I trust I have gained a son instead of losing a daughter.'*

* Seaforth Papers at Brahan Castle, Ross-shire.

Early next year (1821), Scott was in London, and on February 16, took place the unfortunate duel, in which John Scott, editor of the *London Magazine*, fell. The antagonist of John Scott was Mr Christie, a barrister, the friend of Lockhart. 'I have had much to plague me here,' writes Sir Walter, 'besides the death of John Scott, who departed last night; so much for being slow to take the field!' And in another letter he recurs to the subject: 'The death of my unlucky namesake, John Scott, you will have heard of. The poor man fought a most unnecessary duel to regain his lost character, and so lost his life into the bargain.' The loss of life was chiefly owing to the blundering of John Scott's second in the duel, who permitted a second fire to take place after Mr Christie had discharged his pistol down the field.

The visit of King George IV. to Scotland in 1822, was an event sure to call forth the enthusiastic loyalty of Sir Walter. His Majesty's personal attentions, besides the distinction of the baronetcy, elicited his warmest gratitude, and, in addition, all his fervid nationality and veneration for the throne were kindled on this occasion. To see the king in the ancient palace of Holyrood, was itself an incident like the realisation of a dream. The whole city was in a state of frantic excitement: 'Edinburgh is irrecoverably mad,' said Scott. To Laidlaw, the chivalrous poet writes:

'DEAR WILLIE—You are quite right in your opinion of Saunders. He never shewed himself a more true-blooded gentleman. The extreme tact and taste of all ranks has surprised the king and all about him. No rushing or roaring, but a devoted attachment, expressed

by a sort of dignified reverence, which seemed divided betwixt a high veneration for their sovereign and a suitable regard for themselves. I have seen in my day many a levee and drawing-room, but none so august and free from absurdity and ridicule as those of Holyrood. The apartments also, desolate and stripped as they have been, are worth a hundred of Carlton or Buckingham House; but the singular and native good-breeding of the people, who never saw a court, is the most remarkable of all. The populace without, shew the same propriety as the gentles within. The people that our carriages passed amongst to-day were all full of feeling, and it was remarkable that, instead of huzzaing, they shewed the singular compliment of lifting up their children to see them—the most affecting thing you ever witnessed. When Saunders goes wrong, it must be from *malice prepense;* for no one knows so well how to do right. Mamma (Lady Scott), Sophia, and Anne were dreadfully frightened, and I, of course, though an old courtier, in such a court as Holyrood, was a good deal uneasy. The king, however, spoke to them, and they were all kissed in due form, though they protest they are still at a loss how the ceremony was performed. The king leaves on Wednesday, to my great joy, for strong emotions cannot last. He has lived entirely within doors. To-morrow, I suppose, there is a dinner-party at Dalkeith, as I am commanded there, but it is the first. I have had, from over-exertion and distress of mind, a strong cutaneous eruption in my legs and arms. You would think I had adopted the national musical instrument to regale his Majesty; but, seriously, I believe I should have been ill but for the relief Nature has been pleased to afford me in this

ungainly way. Fortunately, my hands and face are clear. W. S.'

And Laidlaw, writing to a friend, gives some further particulars:

'Sir Walter was very full of the king for a while, but we went up Ettrick, and I have seen but little of him since. He had serious work with the English noblemen in the king's train, who did not seem to wish that Scotland should shew off as an independent kingdom, which, by the articles of the Union, was provided for in the event of the king's coming to Edinburgh. They wanted all to be done according to English form, as was the case in Ireland, but he settled them. They proposed, too, that the Highland guard (indeed they objected to the guard altogether) should have the flints taken from their pistols! A deputy, Colonel Stevenson, had the management, and corresponded with Sir Walter; and as he was to dine at Castle Street with a number of the Highland chiefs, Sir Walter proposed that the colonel should speak to them on the subject. After they were a little warmed with wine, Sir Walter addressed Stevenson, who sat beside him, saying he had better now propose what he had mentioned before. The Highlanders had got to telling old stories, and were in high spirits; they were, of course, in full dress. Colonel Stevenson said he saw now that he had mistaken the sort of people beside him; and on Sir Walter pressing him (rather slyly) to proceed, he declared he would rather not.

'The king was greatly surprised and affected with the behaviour of the people on Sunday. They did not cheer as usual, but took off their hats and bowed as they passed along. He expressed himself strongly to

Sir Walter about this. Sir Walter said the verses of the cavalier to his mistress might be applied to the people:

> "Yet this inconstancy is such
> As you too shall adore;
> I could not love thee, dear, so much,
> Loved I not honour more."

I found the lines were by Lovelace, addressed to his Lucasta, on his going to the wars. The king witnessed an incident that seemed, as Sir Walter said, to have made a deep impression on his mind. As he came along the Calton Hill road, the crowd made a rush down hill towards the royal carriage, and the king saw a child fall. Had it been in London, he said, the child would have been trampled to death, and he expected nothing else. But in a moment there was a loud cry of "Stop!" and five or six men linked themselves together arm-in-arm, and set themselves to keep off the crowd, standing like an arch; then a man stepped before them and lifted the boy, and held him up above the crowd, to shew that he was not hurt. Sir Walter heard the king relate this incident twice.'

In the autumn of 1825, Sir Walter visited Ireland, and thus, in homely confidential style, records his impressions:

'My dear Willie—I conclude you are now returned, with wife and bairns, to Kaeside, and not the worse of your tour. I have been the better of mine; and Killarney being the extreme point, I am just about to commence my return to Dublin, where I only intend to remain two or three days at farthest. I should like to find a line from you, addressed "Care of David Macculloch, Esq., Cheltenham," letting me know how

matters go on at Abbotsford—if you want money (as I suppose you do), and so forth.

'I have every reason to make a good report of Ireland, having been received with distinction, which is flattering, and with warm-hearted kindness, which is much better. I am happy to say the country is rapidly improving every year, which argues the spirit that is afloat, and indicates that British capital is finding its way into a country where it can be employed to advantage. The idea of security is gaining ground even in those districts which are, or rather were, the most unsettled, and plenty has brought her usual companion content, in her hand. But the public peace is secured chiefly by large bodies of armed police, called by the civil term of constables, but very unlike the Dogberries of England, being, in fact, soldiers on foot and horse, well armed and mounted, and dressed exactly like our yeomen. It is not pleasant to see this, but it is absolutely necessary for some time at least; and from all I can hear, the men are under strict discipline, and behave well. They are commanded by the magistracy, and are very alert.

'The soil is in most places extremely rich, but cultivation is not as yet well understood. That accursed system of making peats interferes with everything; and I have passed through whole counties where a very noble harvest, ripe for the sickle, was waiting for the next shower of rain; while all the population who should cut were up to the midst in bogs. Not a single field of turnips have I seen, owing probably to the same reason.

'The political disputes are of far less consequence here than we think in Britain; but, on the whole, it

would be highly desirable that the Catholic Bill should pass. It would satisfy most of the higher classes of that persuasion, who seem much inclined to form a sort of Low Church, differing in ceremonies more than in essential points from that of the English Church. I mean they would do this tacitly and gradually. The lower class will probably continue for a long time bigoted Papists; but education becoming general, it is to be supposed that popery, in its violent tenets, will decline even amongst them. By the way, education is already far more general than in England. I saw in the same village four hundred Catholic children attending school, and about two hundred Protestants attending another. The peculiar doctrines of neither church were permitted to be taught; and there were Protestants amongst the Papist children, and Papists among the Protestant.

'The general condition of the peasantry requires much improvement. Their cabins are wretched, and their dress such a labyrinth of rags, that I have often feared some button would give way, and shame us all. But this is mending, and the younger people are all more decently dressed, and the new huts which are arising are greatly better than the old pigsties. In short, all is on the move and the mend. But as I must be on the move myself, I must defer the rest of my discoveries till we meet. We have in our party, Anne, Lockhart, Walter and his wife, and two Miss Edgeworths, so we are a jolly party. Will you shew this to Lady Scott? I wrote to her two dâys since.—Always truly yours, WALTER SCOTT.

'KILLARNEY, 8*th August*.'

The brilliance of Abbotsford had now reached its

culminating point. The commercial crisis of 1825–26 was close at hand, and the first note of the alarm and confusion in the money-market suspended all improvements, and occasioned intense anxiety to Sir Walter. We add two letters as supplementing Lockhart's narrative:

'My dear William—The money-market in London is in a tremendous state, so much so that, whatever good reason I have, and I have the best, for knowing that Constable and his allies, Hurst and Robinson, are in perfect force, yet I hold it wise and necessary to prepare myself for making good my engagements, which come back on me suddenly, or by taking up those which I hold good security for. For this purpose I have resolved to exercise my reserved faculty to burden Abbotsford with £8000 or £10,000. I can easily get the money, and having no other debts, and these well secured, I hold it better to "put money in my purse," and be a debtor on my land for a year or two, till the credit of the public is restored. I may not want the money, in which case I will buy into the funds, and make some cash by it. But I think it would be most necessary, and even improper not to be fully prepared.

'What I want of you is to give me a copy of the rental of Abbotsford, as it now stands, mentioning the actual rents of ground let, and the probable rents of those in my hand. You gave me one last year, but I would rather have the actual rents, and as such business is express, I would have you send it immediately, and keep it all as much within as you think fair and prudent. Your letter need only contain the rental, and you may

write your remarks separately. I have not the slightest idea of losing a penny, but the distrust is so great in London that the best houses refuse the best bills of the best tradesmen, and as I have retained such a sum in view of protecting my literary commerce, I think it better to make use of it, and keep my own mind easy, than to carry about bills to unwilling banks, and beg for funds which I can use of my own. I have more than £10,000 to receive before Midsummer, but then I might be put to vexation before that, which I am determined to prevent.

'By all I can learn, this is just such an embarrassment as may arise when pickpockets cry "Fire!" in a crowd, and honest men get trampled to death. Thank God, I can clear myself of the *mêlée*, and am not afraid of the slightest injury. If the money horizon does not clear up in a month or two, I will abridge my farming, &c. I cannot find there is any real cause for this; but an imaginary one will do equal mischief. I need not say this is confidential.—Yours truly, WALTER SCOTT.

'16*th December* [1825], EDINBURGH.'

'The confusion of 1814 is a joke to this. I have no debts of my own. On the contrary, £3000 and more lying out on interest, &c. It is a little hard that, making about £7000 a year, and working hard for it, I should have this botheration. But it arises out of the nature of the same connection which gives, and has given me, a fortune, and therefore I am not entitled to grumble.'

[EDINBURGH, *January* 26, 1826.]

'MY DEAR WILLIE—I wrote to you some days since,

but from yours by the carrier I see my letter has not reached you. It does not much signify, as it was not, and could not be, of any great consequence until I see how these untoward matters are to turn up. Of course, everything will depend on the way the friends of the great house in London, and those of Constable here, shall turn out. Were they to be ultimately good, or near it, this would pass over my head with little inconvenience. But I think it better to take the worst point of view, and suppose that I do not receive from them above five shillings in the pound; and even in that case, I am able to make a proposal to my creditors, that if they allow me to put my affairs into the hands of a private trustee, or trustees, and finish the literary engagements I have on hand, there is no great chance of their being ultimate losers. This is the course I should choose. But if they wish rather to do what they can for themselves, they will, in that case, give me a great deal of pain, and make a great deal less of the funds. For, it is needless to say, that no security can make a man write books, and upon my doing so—I mean completing those in hand—depends the instant payment of a large sum. I have no reason to apprehend that any of the parties concerned are blind to their interest in this matter. I have had messages from all the banks, &c., offering what assistance they could give, so that I think my offer will be accepted. Indeed, as they cannot sell Abbotsford, owing to its being settled in Walter's marriage contract, there can be little doubt they will adopt the only way which promises, with a little time, to give them full payment, and my life may, in the meanwhile, be insured. My present occupations completed, will enable me to lay down, in the course of the summer,

at least £20,000 of good cash, which, if things had remained sound among the booksellers, would have put me on velvet.

'The probable result being that we must be accommodated with the delay necessary, our plan is to sell the house and furniture in Castle Street, and Lady S. and Anne to come to Abbotsford, with a view of economising, while I take lodgings in Edinburgh, and work hard till the Session permits me to come out. All our farming operations must, of course, be stopped so soon as they can with least possible loss, and stock, &c., disposed of. In short, everything must be done to avoid outlay. At the same time, there can be no want of comfort. I must keep Peter and the horses for Lady Scott's sake, though I make sacrifices in my own [case]. Bogie, I think, we will also keep, but we must sell the produce of the garden. As for Tom, he and I go to the grave together. All idle horses, &c., must be dispensed with.

'For you, my dear friend, we must part—that is, as laird and factor—and it rejoices me to think that your patience and endurance, which set me so good an example, are like to bring round better days. You never flattered my prosperity, and in my adversity it is not the least painful consideration that I cannot any longer be useful to you. But Kaeside, I hope, will still be your residence; and I will have the advantage of your company and advice, and probably your services as amanuensis. Observe, I am not in indigence, though no longer in affluence; and if I am to exert myself in the common behalf, I must have honourable and easy means of life, although it will be my inclination to observe the most strict privacy, both to save expense

and also time; nor do we propose to see any one but yourself and the Fergusons.

'I will be obliged to you to think over all these matters; also whether anything could be done in leasing the saw-mill, or Swanston working it for the public. I should like to keep him if I could. I imagine they must leave me my official income, which, indeed, is not liable to be attached. That will be £1600 a year, but there is Charles's college expenses come to £300 at least. I can add, however, £200 or £300 without interrupting serious work. Three or four years of my favour with the public, if my health and life permit, will make me better off than ever I have been in my life. I hope it will not inconvenience the Miss Smiths to be out of their money for a little while. It is a most unexpected chance on my part.

'All that I have said is for your consideration and making up your mind, for nothing can be certain till we hear what the persons principally concerned please to say. But then, if they accede to the trust, we will expect to have the pleasure of seeing you here with a list of stock and a scheme of what you think best to be done. My purpose is that everything shall be paid ready money from week to week.

'I have £180 to send to you, and it is in my hands. Of course it will be paid, but I am unwilling to send it until I know the exact footing on which I am to stand. The gentleman whom I wish should be my trustee—or one of them—is John Gibson, the Duke's factor.

'Lady Scott's spirits were affected at first, but she is getting better. For myself, I feel like the Eildon Hills —quite firm, though a little cloudy. I do not dislike the path which lies before me. I have seen all that

society can shew, and enjoyed all that wealth can give me, and I am satisfied much is vanity, if not vexation of spirit. I am arranging my affairs, and mean to economise a good deal, and I will pay every man his due.—Yours truly, WALTER SCOTT.'

There was some delusion in all this. Sir Walter never fully comprehended the state of his pecuniary affairs. It was one of his weaknesses, as James Ballantyne has said, to shrink too much from looking evil in the face, and he was apt to carry a great deal too far 'sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.' Laidlaw mentions another small weakness: 'he was always in alarm lest the servants should suspect he was in want of money.' This, of course, was subsequent to the public declaration of the failure. Laidlaw went to Edinburgh to report to the trustees with respect to the best way of closing the farm business, and there met Sir Walter.

'He bears himself wonderfully. Miss Scott does not seem to be quite aware or sensible of anything but that they are to reside in retirement at Abbotsford. Lady Scott is rather unwilling to believe it, and does not see the necessity of such complete retrenchment as Sir Walter tells her is absolutely necessary. I have dined three times there, and there is not much difference in their manner. Sir W. is often merry, and so are they all, but still oftener silent. I think that if they were a week or two at Abbotsford they would be more happy than they have been for many a day. I am sure this would be the case with Sir Walter, for the weight of such an immense system of bills sent for his signature every now and then would be off his mind. I heard to-day that the Duke of Somerset and another English

nobleman have written to Sir Walter, offering him £30,000 each, which he has firmly refused; and it is reported that the young Duke of Buccleuch has written him, offering to take the whole loss on himself, and to pay the interest of Sir Walter's debt until he comes of age. If that is true, Sir Walter should accept the offer for the Duke's own sake—for the glorious moral effect it would have upon the truly noble young fellow. But, apart from all this, cannot they set up Constable again? He has likewise been a real benefactor to his country, and then Sir Walter would, of course, be relieved.'

The private grief of Scott was for a short time merged in what he considered an important public cause. The Liverpool Administration at this time proposed to change the Scotch system of currency, abolishing the small bank-notes, and assimilating the monetary system of Scotland to that of England. This project was assailed by the wit, humour, sound sense, and nationality of Scott, in a series of letters signed 'Malachi Malagrowther,' and the letters of Malachi were as successful as those of Swift's 'M. B. Drapier' concerning the currency of Ireland. The English government, in both cases, was compelled to abandon the denationalising scheme. Scott writes to Laidlaw, March 1, 1826:

'I enclose a couple of copies of a pamphlet on the currency, which may amuse you. The other copy is for Mr Craig, Galashiels. I have got off some bile from my stomach which has been disturbing me for some years. The Scotch have a fair opportunity now to give battle, if they dare avail themselves of it. One would think I had little to do, that I should go loose upon politics.'

He had, in fact, entered upon his herculean task of

paying off some £120,000 of debt by his pen! The *Life of Napoleon* was commenced, and in the autumn the biographer set off for London and Paris to consult state-papers and gather information. He succeeded well in his errand. 'My collection of information,' he writes, 'goes on faster than I can take it in; but, then, it is so much coloured by passion and party-feeling, that it requires much scouring. I spent a day at the Royal Lodge at Windsor, which was a grand affair for John Nicholson, as he got an opportunity to see his Majesty.' And the incident, no doubt, afforded as much gratification to the kind, indulgent master as it did to the servant.

After the Abbotsford establishment was broken up, Laidlaw was some time engaged in cataloguing the large library of Scott of Harden, and at times visiting his brothers, sheep-farmers in Ross-shire. The following description of a scene he witnessed, a Highland Summer Sacrament out of doors, evinces no mean powers of observation and description:

'The people here gather in thousands to the sacraments, as they did in Ettrick in Boston's time. We set out on Sunday to the communion at Ferrintosh, near Dingwall, to which the people resort from fifty miles' distance. Macdonald, the minister who attracts this concourse of persons, was the son of a piper in Caithness (but from the Celtic population of the mountains there). He preached the sermon in the church in English, with a command of language and a justness of tone, action, and reasoning—keeping close to the pure metaphysics of Calvin—that I have seldom, if ever, heard surpassed. He had great energy on all points, but it never touched on extravagance. The Highland

congregation sat in a *cleugh*, or dell, of a long, hollow, oval shape, bordered with hazel and birch and wild-roses. It seemed to be formed for the purpose. We walked round the outside of the congregated thousands, and looked down on the glen from the upper end, and the scene was really indescribable. Two-thirds of those present were women, dressed mostly in large, high, wide muslin caps, the back part standing up like the head of a paper kite, and ornamented with ribbons. They had wrapped round them bright-coloured plaid shawls, the predominant hue being scarlet.

'It was a warm, breezy day, one of the most glorious in June. The place will be about half a mile from the Frith on the south side, and at an elevation of five hundred feet. Dingwall was just opposite at the foot of Ben Wyvis, still spotted with wreaths of snow. Over the town, with its modern castle, its church, and Lombardy poplars, we saw up the richly cultivated valley of Strathpeffer. The tufted rocks and woods of Brahan (Mackenzie of Seaforth) were a few miles to the south, and fields of wheat and potatoes, separated with hedgerows of trees, intervened. Further off, the high-peaked mountains that divide the county of Inverness from Ross-shire towered in the distance. I never saw such a scene. We sat down on the brae among the people, the long white communion tables being conspicuous at the bottom. The congregation began singing the psalm to one of the plaintive, wild old tunes that I am told are only sung in the Gaelic service. The people all sing, but in such an extended multitude they could not sing all together. They chanted, as it were, in masses or large groups. I can compare the singing to nothing earthly, except it be imagining what would

be the effect of a gigantic and tremendous Æolian harp with hundreds of strings! There was no resisting the impression. After coming a little to myself, I went and paced the length and breadth of the amphitheatre, taking averages, and carefully noting, as well as I could, how the people were sitting together, and I could not, in this way, make them less than 9500, besides those in the church, amounting perhaps to 1500. Most of the gentlemen of the neighbourhood, with their families, were there. I enjoyed the scene as something perfect in its way, and of rare beauty and excellence—like Melrose Abbey under a fine light, or the back of old Edinburgh during an illumination, or the Loch of the Lowes in a fine calm July evening, five minutes after sunset!'

The following brief and pleasant note, without date, must be referred to 1827, as it was in June of that year that the *Life of Napoleon* was published:

'My dear Mr Laidlaw—I would be happy if you would come down at *kail-time* to-day. *Napoleon* (6000 copies) is sold for £11,000.—Yours truly, W. S.
'*Sunday.*'

Mr Gibson, W.S., in his *Reminiscences of Sir Walter Scott* (1871), says of the transactions of this period: 'Of *Woodstock*, 9850 copies were sold for £9500; and of the *Life of Napoleon*, 8000 copies were sold for £18,200, and these sums, with some other funds realised, were speedily divided amongst the creditors.' Under the date of August 1827, Sir Walter writes in the following affectionate strain:

'Your leaving Kaeside makes a most melancholy blank to us. You, Mrs Laidlaw, and the bairns, were objects we met with so much pleasure, that it is painful

to think of strangers being there. But they do not deserve good weather who cannot endure the bad, and so I would "set a stout heart to a stey" [steep] "brae;" yet I think the loss of our walks, plans, discussions, and debates, does not make the least privation that I experience from the loss of world's gear. But, *sursum corda*, and we shall have many happy days yet, and spend some of them together. I expect Walter and Jane, and then our long-separated family will be all together in peace and happiness. I hope Mrs Laidlaw and you will come down and spend a few days with us, and revisit your old haunts. I miss you terribly at this moment, being engaged in writing a planting article for the *Quarterly*, and not having patience to make some necessary calculations.'

Mr Laidlaw has written on the back of the communication: 'This letter lies in the drawer in which the unfinished manuscript of *Waverley* was found, amongst fishing-tackle, &c. which yet remain. I got the desk as a present from Sir Walter.'

The death, in the autumn of 1829, of faithful Tom Purdie—forester, henchman, and humble friend—was a heavy blow to Sir Walter, then fast sinking in vigour and alacrity. The proverbial difficulty of obtaining a precisely exact account of any contemporary event, even from parties most closely connected with it, is illustrated in this case. Lockhart reports the death as follows:

'Thomas Purdie leaned his head one evening on the table, and dropped asleep. This was nothing uncommon in a hard-working man; and his family went and came about him for several hours, without taking any notice. When supper came, they tried to awaken him, and found that life had been for some time extinct.'

Scott's account is different:

'My dear Willie—I write to tell you the shocking news of poor Tom Purdie's death, by which I have been greatly affected. He had complained, or rather spoken, of a sore throat; and the day before yesterday, as it came on a shower of rain, I wanted him to walk fast on to Abbotsford before me, but you know well how impossible that was. He took some jelly, or trifle of that kind, but made no complaint. This morning he rose from bed as usual, and sat down by the table with his head on his hand; and when his daughter spoke to him, life had passed away without a sigh or groan. Poor fellow! There is a heart cold that loved me well, and, I am sure, thought of my interest more than his own. I have seldom been so much shocked. I wish you would take a ride down and pass the night. There is much I have to say, and this loss adds to my wish to see you. We dine at four. The day is indifferent, but the sooner the better.—Yours very truly,

Walter Scott.

'Abbotsford, 31*st October*.'

A few days afterwards (November 5), Laidlaw thus relates the story:

'Tom Purdie, poor fellow! died on Friday night or Saturday morning. He had fallen asleep with his head on his hands resting on the table, his usual practice. Margaret and Mary' [his wife and daughter] 'left him to go to bed when he should awaken; and Margaret found him exactly in the same situation when she rose, but dead, cold, and stiff. Sir Walter wrote to me, in great distress, to come down. I did so on Sunday, and on Tuesday I went to poor Tom's funeral. Sir Walter

had my pony put in again, and made me stay all day. He was in very great distress about Tom, and will miss him continually, and in many ways that come nearest to him. Sir Walter wants us to return to Kaeside at Whitsunday. *Kindness of heart is positively the reigning quality of Sir Walter's character!*'

A noble eulogium, and pronounced by one better qualified, perhaps, than any of his contemporaries, to form the opinion so expressed. Of the greatest author of his age it might truly be said:

'His highest honours to the heart belong.'

William Laidlaw *did* return to Kaeside. At Whitsuntide 1830, he dropped anchor safely at his old roadstead, which had been suitably prepared for his reception. But before doing so, we find him putting in a kind word for the Ettrick Shepherd, who was in difficulties. In March 1830, Laidlaw wrote to Sir Walter:

'I had your letter from Bowhill, and was much gratified to learn that you and Miss Scott had passed so much time with the duke and duchess. I have no doubt that His Grace would bring our friend the Shepherd and his concerns before you, and I am anxious to know if it is the duke's intention to render him a little more comfortable at Altrive. You know that Hogg built the cottage there, at his own expense (with an allowance of wood, perhaps), and he likewise built a considerable addition to Mount Benger, and a barn—all which cost him a great sum of money, quite disproportionate to a holding of £7 a year, even at a nominal rent. The cottage was intended for a bachelor's abode, and is very inadequate to what is now required by the bard's family; and I see that if His

Grace does not think of giving him some allowance as an addition, it will most likely banish him from the district with which his poetry and feeling are so closely associated. I mention all this because I have observed that there is a prejudice against him among the sub-agents since Christie left the service, or rather, since the late duke's death. One of them said to me, when I mentioned Hogg's genius and amiable character, *Cui bono?* I, too, say, *Cui bono?* What is the use of all his poetry, and the rest? Now, from R.'s usage of him, there is every reason to suspect that he is a *cui bono* man too, and Hogg stands a bad chance among them, and I believe the duke knows nothing about the truth of the matter.'

Nothing was done. 'As to the success of an application to the duke,' writes Scott, 'I am doubtful. The duke seemed to have made up his mind on the subject, and I saw no chance of being of service.' Literature and the journey to London did something for the Shepherd. He wrote and struggled on at Altrive till November 1835, when the 'world's poor strife' was over, and he sank to rest.

Among the dearest and most valued of all the visitors at Abbotsford were the Fergusons of Huntly Burn. Here is a kindly note sent to Kaeside:

'Miss Ferrier is to be at Abbotsford this day, being Tuesday, 20th October' [1829], 'and Mr Wilkie is to be there on Thursday; so, if you come, you will have painting, poetry, history, and music—as Miss Wilkie is a musician. In short, all the Muses will be there. If this does not tempt you, I don't know what will.—Yours truly, ISABELLA FERGUSON.'

Ill-health and political agitation brought darker days to Abbotsford. The Reform Bill was Sir Walter's *bête noire*. The neighbouring Tory lairds, proud of his co-operation, induced him to join in their local movement against the bill, and this still further aggravated his morbid feeling. In March 1831, he was present at a meeting of the freeholders of Roxburgh, held at Jedburgh, to pass resolutions against the Reform Bill. He was dragged to the meeting by the young Duke of Buccleuch and Mr Henry Scott of Harden, contrary to his prior resolution, and his promise to Miss Scott; for his health was then much shattered. 'He made a confused imaginative speech,' says Laidlaw, 'which was full of evil forebodings and mistaken views. The people who were auditors, in proportion to their love and reverence for him, felt disappointed and sore, and, like himself, were carried away by their temporary chagrin, to the great regret of the country around.' At the election in Jedburgh, Sir Walter was hooted at, and hissed, and saluted with cries of 'Burke Sir Walter!' Laidlaw adds: 'The same people, a few weeks afterwards, when Mr Oliver, the sheriff of Roxburgh, was foolishly swearing in constables at Melrose, said boldly they need not bring them to fight against reform, for they would fight for it; but if any one meddled with Sir Walter Scott, they would fight for him.' Amidst all the excitement of politics, and in sinking health, Sir Walter continued to write, or rather to dictate, and worked steadily at his novel of *Count Robert of Paris*.

'I am now writing as amanuensis for Sir Walter,' said Laidlaw; 'and have the satisfaction of finding that I am of essential service to him, as he was attacked with chilblains on his hands to such a degree as to

unfit him for writing long unless with great pain. We go on with almost as great spirit as when he dictated *Ivanhoe.* He has become a good deal lamer, which prevents him from taking his usual walks; and he gets upon a pony with great difficulty. But of late he has been in excellent spirits. His memory seems to be as good as ever; at least, it is far beyond that of other people. I come down at seven o'clock, and write until nine; we are at it again before ten, and continue until one. He is impatient and miserable when not employed.'

About this time—the spring of 1831—Joanna Baillie published a thin volume of selections from the New Testament 'regarding the nature and dignity of Jesus Christ.' The tendency of the work was Socinian, or at least Arian; and Scott was indignant that his friend should have meddled with such a subject. 'What had *she* to do with questions of that sort?' He refused to add the book to his library, and gave it to Laidlaw. One day Sir Walter was loud in praise of one of the workmen engaged at Abbotsford, a native of the neighbouring village of Darnick. 'Yes,' added Laidlaw; 'and do you know, Sir Walter, he is an excellent Burgher preacher.'* 'A preacher, d—n him!' exclaimed Scott jocularly, and wheeling round as if to whistle the Burgher preacher down the wind.

In a very manly and interesting letter, addressed to Lockhart (of which he had kept a copy), Laidlaw enters into further particulars concerning the studies at Abbotsford:

'Sir Walter is very greatly better. He has given up

* The Burghers were a religious sect, now merged in the United Presbyterian body.

smoking, and takes porridge to his supper instead of the long and hearty pull of brown stout. He is full of jokes and glee. Were it possible to prevail upon him to wear a greatcoat when he rides out to the hills in a north-west wind, and to take champagne and water instead of a monstrous tumbler of strong ale after tea, I am positive—and so are the regular medical people—that he would get right again. He drinks no wine, and has been advised to take gin-toddy instead of whisky. He has given up the regular dram out of a *quaich*, but takes a sly taste of the excellent hollands before he *coups* it into the tumbler, thereby satisfying his conscience, no doubt, by reducing it to the half-glass which, it seems, is the Abercromby law as to strong liquors. Don't you mind the style of his letters; that is all, or nearly all, humbug. What he dictates of *Robert of Paris* is, much of it, as good as anything he ever wrote. He does not go on so fast; but I do not see that he is much more apt to make blunders—that is, to let his imagination get ahead of his speech—than when he wrote *Ivanhoe*. The worst business was that accursed nonsensical petition in the name of the magistrates, justices of the peace, and freeholders of the extensive, influential, and populous county of Selkirk! We were more than three days at it. At the beginning of the third day, he walked backwards and forwards, enunciating the half-sentences with a deep and awful voice, his eyebrows seemingly more shaggy than ever, and his eyes more fierce and glaring—altogether, like the royal beast in his cage! It suddenly came over me, as politics was always Sir Walter's weak point, that he was crazy, and that I should have to come down to Abbotsford, and write on and away at the petition until the crack of

doom! I was seized at the same moment with an inclination, almost uncontrollable, to burst into laughter. But seriously, you know, as well as anybody, his great excitability on political matters; and I must say it surprised me not a little that a person of your sagacity and acuteness should have thought of writing him upon politics at all, the more, because I believe that if a magpie were to come and chatter politics, or even that body, Lord M., he would believe all they said, if they spoke of change, and danger, and rumours of war—*belli servilis* more than all. (May I speak and live!) I felt inclined to doubt whether you had not *gane gyte*' [gone crazy] 'yourself! Could you not have sent him literary chit-chat and amusing anecdotes from London, which would have been the very thing for him, as it was of great consequence that his mind should be kept calm and cheerful?'

Mental disease and physical infirmity continued to increase, and a winter at Naples, with complete abstinence from literary labour, was prescribed. Wordsworth prayed for favouring gales:

> 'Be true,
> Ye winds of ocean, and the midland sea,
> Wafting your charge to soft Parthenope!'

Alas! it was all in vain. Before quitting the country, Sir Walter gave Laidlaw a mandate, or letter of authority, to represent him at county meetings, and a paper of directions as to keeping the house, the books, and garden in order. Two items are worth quoting as characteristic:

'The dogs to be taken care of, especially to shut them up separately when there is anything to quarrel about.

'When Mr Laidlaw thinks it will be well taken, to consult Mr Nicol Milne, and not to stop young Mr Nicol when shooting on our side of the hedge.'

Having made these arrangements, the invalid thought of taking a farewell look of Melrose Abbey. One morning Mr Laidlaw's family were startled to see Sir Walter approaching Kaeside, feeble, and wearing his nightcap, which apparently he had forgotten to exchange for a hat. No notice was taken of the circumstance. After the usual kindly salutations, he said, with a tremulous voice, that he had come to take a last look of the abbey. He proceeded to an elevated point commanding a view of the spot, and after gazing long and anxiously down on the town and abbey, he said slowly: 'It is a venerable ruin!' and returned to Abbotsford.

The government, as is well known, placed a frigate at his disposal for the voyage to the Mediterranean. The reception at Portsmouth, and the arrangements on board the *Barham*, were highly gratifying to Sir Walter and his family. 'The ship is magnificent,' writes Mrs Lockhart, 'and carries four hundred and eighty men. The rooms are excellent, and everything that could be thought of for papa's comfort, in every way, has been done.' Hopes of his ultimate recovery were entertained. Cadell writes, December 29, 1831: 'I have two long letters from Sir Walter, one dated "Off Trafalgar, 14th November," and finished at Malta on the 23d. He is in great glee, and must be much better. He has made some progress with a new novel, *The Siege of Malta*.' At the date of the second letter, he had got through thirty of his own pages. Major Scott arrived from Naples on the 1st of April 1832, and brought no very

flattering tidings. 'From his talk,' writes Lockhart, 'and from a huge bundle of letters which he conveyed, we draw one inference—namely, that though the bodily strength of your friend has improved since he left us, there has been rather, if anything, a further dislocation and prostration of the better part. Cadell is here, and he and I and the major spent a sad enough evening over the budget.' All hope was soon dispelled. The hurried journey home from Italy induced another attack of apoplexy. He was struck while in the steamboat on the Rhine at Cologne, and fell into Miss Scott's arms. Nicholson bled him instantly, and restored animation. They pushed on for Rotterdam, and got there just as the London boat was setting off for England. Laidlaw writes to a friend:

'You will see by the newspapers that Sir Walter is coming home to die, I fear, or worse. It has come to what I always feared since he told me that Mr Cadell had half the proceeds of the great new edition. Sir Walter's permanent income is, as you know, reduced salary, £840; sheriffdom, £300—total, £1140. No person can live at Abbotsford, and keep it up, in a country-gentlemanly way, under £2000 a year, for it will take nearly £1200 for servants, taxes, coals, garden, horses, &c. The run of strangers was immense. Sir Walter wrote for Keepsakes, Reviews, &c., and kept things going; but of late this stream dried up, and he has been confused in his notions of money matters. He is much involved, and will not be able to draw any more than his salaries. He has all this winter taken it into his head that his debts are paid off, and this was from catching at an idea of Cadell's of borrowing money and paying the creditors all except the interest. He

will know the truth when he comes to London, and this, with the winter and cold weather, will kill him. How can a man with his sensibility, used for thirty years to the strongest excitement, and living on popular applause, in luxury, glitter, and show, survive when all is gone, and nothing but ruin, coldness, and darkness remain?'

Deprived of the use of his right arm and side, weak and depressed, Sir Walter reached London on the evening of the 13th of June 1832. Five days later, Cadell writes: 'Our poor friend is still alive, but very ill. He took leave of his children to-day, very clearly and distinctly. In the morning, he mistook Lockhart for me; and it was some time before he could be put right. The doctors doubt his getting over to-night.' He rallied, however, and next month was conveyed to Abbotsford. Laidlaw's account of Sir Walter's arrival (written the day after) differs in some particulars from the narrative of Lockhart—one of the most affecting narratives in the language.

'I was at the door when he' [Sir Walter], 'Mr and Mrs Lockhart, and Miss Scott arrived. They said he would not know me. He was in a sort of long carriage that opened at the back. He had an uncommon stupid look, staring straight before him; and assuredly he did not know where he was. It was very dismal. I began to feel myself agitated in spite of all my resolution. Lockhart ordered away the ladies; and two servants, in perfect silence, lifted him out, and carried him into the dining-room. I followed, of course. They had placed him in a low arm-chair, where he reclined. Mrs Lockhart made a sign for me to step forward to see if he would recognise me. She said: "Mr Laidlaw, papa."

He raised his eyes a little, and when he caught mine, he started, and exclaimed: "Good God, Mr Laidlaw! I have thought of you a thousand times!" and he held out his hand. They were all very much surprised; and it being quite unexpected, I was much affected. He was put to bed. I had gone into one of the empty rooms, and some little time after Nicholson came to tell me that Sir Walter wished to see me. He spoke a little confusedly, but inquired if the people were suffering any hardship, if they were satisfied, &c. I had written to him that I had paid off nine or ten of the men after he had gone away last year. I did not remain long.

'I understand Sir Walter's mind has been wandering from one dream to another; but now and then breaking through the cloud that hangs over it, and surprising his attendants with glimpses of his original intellect. Alas, alas! However, he has rested better than for some time past, and was wheeled into the library' [July 12], 'and seemed gratified. When I called about eleven o'clock, he was sound asleep.'

A fortnight later, Laidlaw writes:

'Sir Walter is generally collected in the morning, and very restless and troublesome to his daughters during the afternoon and night; often raving, but always quiet, and generally shewing command of himself when Lockhart comes in. Sometimes he seemed gratified at being at home, and even once or twice made pertinent quotations, and spoke of books, &c. Until yesterday, he always knew me, and I clearly saw he had then a distressing desire to speak to me. I perceived that although he might appear to feel little pain, he was really suffering a great deal, partly from a sense of his situation and inaction, but chiefly from the overpowering

cloud and weight upon his great intellect. Yesterday, he was apparently unconscious; he could not speak, but was wheeled into the library for awhile. I never witnessed a more moving or more melancholy sight. Once, when Lockhart spoke of his restlessness, he replied: "There will be rest in the grave."'

One delusion under which the illustrious sufferer laboured was preparing Abbotsford for the reception of the Duke of Wellington. Another was, his personation of the character of a Scottish judge trying his own daughters. In the course of the latter, there were painful bursts of violence and excitement. 'It is strange,' said Laidlaw, 'that he never refers to any of his works or literary plans.' The truth is, he had thrown them off, to use an expression of his own, with 'an effort as spontaneous as that of a tree resigning its leaves to the wind,' and they soon passed from his memory. Besides, he had, when in health, always practised a modest reticence respecting his works, which had become habitual. The following points to the end of the struggle:

'Poor papa still lingers, although in the most hopeless state of mind and body. For this week past, the doctor has taken leave every day, saying he could not survive the twenty-four hours; and to-day, he says the pulse is weaker and worse than ever it has been, and that his living is almost a miracle. How thankful we shall be when it pleases God he is at rest, for a more complete aberration of mind never was before; and he even now is so violent we sometimes dare not go within reach of his hand. And the miserable scenes we have witnessed before his strength was reduced as it now is! One

great comfort has been, all suffering, so far as we can judge, mental or bodily, has been spared, and that for two months past he has not for an instant been aware of his situation. My brothers were sent for, and have been here for two days. When all is over, Anne and I and the children will leave this now miserable place for ever. Lockhart is obliged to go straight to London, but we mean to spend a couple of weeks with his relations in Lanarkshire, and perhaps take Rokeby in our way up. We are both much better than you would expect under such sad circumstances. Excuse this miserable scrawl; I hardly know what I write. . . .

C. SOPHIA LOCKHART.

'ABBOTSFORD, *Sunday*' [*September* 16, 1832].*

On the day succeeding that on which this melancholy letter would seem to have been written, Sir Walter had a brief interval of consciousness, as described by Lockhart, although the biographer would appear to have misdated the arrival of the sons of the poet. A few more days terminated the struggle; Sir Walter died on the 21st of September. In October, Laidlaw notes that Major Scott had given him, accompanied with a most gratifying letter, the locket which Sir Walter constantly wore about his neck. This was presented to Sir Walter by Major Scott and his wife (inscribed 'From Walter and Jane') on the day of their marriage, and it contained some of the hair of each. Major Scott enclosed as much of Sir Walter's hair as would supply the place of theirs, which he wished to be taken out of the locket. 'I shall try to find room for all,' said Mr Laidlaw; and he did find room, interlacing the various

* Letter to Hon. Mrs Stewart Mackenzie.

hairs, and wearing the invaluable jewel to his dying day. 'What a change the loss of Abbotsford must be to the Fergusons and you all!' writes Mrs Lockhart, 'the gentle Sophia,' as Miss Martineau describes the fair sufferer. 'It breaks my heart when I think of the silence and desolation that now reign there. They talk of a monument! God knows papa needs no monument; he has left behind him that which won't pass away. But if the people of Melrose do anything, I think a great cairn on one of the hills would be what he would have chosen himself.' Let the hills themselves suffice!

'A mightier monument command
The mountains of his native land.' *

After the death of his chief, Mr Laidlaw removed to the county of Ross, and was successively factor on the estates of Seaforth and Balnagown. His health failing,

* Lockhart also was in favour of a cairn: 'As to monuments, if I could choose—passing Abbotsford—I should say, put a plain sitting statue of Sir W. S. on Princes Street, Edinburgh, at the south end of Castle Street, backed by the rock; and put a cairn on the Eildon Hill, that every lad might carry his stone to. As for *temples* and *pillars*, they have been vulgarised in Edinburgh. A friend said to me: 'Good God, what a grand thing it will be to have Sir Walter put on a level with the late Lord Melville! Let us have another pillar at the west end of George Street, by all means.' This man is a sensible one, and was dead serious. On a level with Lord Melville, whose name will appear only in the fag-end of a note to the future history of this country, and really will be kept in memory chiefly by the pillar! Dugald Stewart and Playfair, admirable dominies both, have their temples; so I fancy will now Sir John Leslie. The Calton Hill had better be left to the schoolmasters; in a hundred years they will have covered it; but, if they please, they may keep a place in the midst for Sir John Sinclair.'—*Letter to Hon. Mrs Stewart Mackenzie.*

he went to reside with his brother, Mr James Laidlaw, sheep-farmer at Contin, also in Ross-shire, and there he died May 18, 1845. His remains were interred in the churchyard of Contin, a retired spot under the shade of Tor Achilty, one of the loftiest and most picturesque of the Ross-shire mountains, and amidst the most enchanting Highland scenery. The lord of the manor, Sir George S. Mackenzie of Coul, Bart., erected a tomb, with a marble tablet, to his memory.

Mr Laidlaw cherished with religious care all his memorials of Abbotsford, where, indeed, his heart may be said to have remained till its last pulsation. The desk in which the first manuscript of *Waverley* was deposited stood in his room; the works inscribed and presented by the author were carefully ranged on his shelves; the letters he had received from him were treasured up; the pens with which *Ivanhoe* was written were laid past, and kept as a sacred thing; but above all he valued the brooch which was round the neck of Scott when he died. That most interesting ornament Mr Laidlaw wore while a trace of sensibility remained, and it has descended to another generation—one of the most precious of the personal *reliquiæ* of a splendid but melancholy friendship.

The biographer of Scott, John Gibson Lockhart, was not a social or clubable man. He was fastidious and reserved, silent in mixed company (he heard with only one ear, and was too proud to acknowledge it), and was inveterately prone to satire, so that he earned for himself the appellation of 'The Scorpion,' and he was a

victim to dyspepsia, which, perhaps, like charity, ought to cover a multitude of sins. His fine acute intellect and classic taste were often obscured and his better sympathies chilled by pain and languor. To a few friends, however, Lockhart at times unbosomed himself. With them his cold, sarcastic, haughty manner melted away—at least for a season—and in those genial hours he was the most confiding and delightful of companions. As shewing the better nature and higher feelings of the man, we are tempted to subjoin one of his letters to William Laidlaw, in which he speaks of the sense of duty and responsibility under which he wrote the Memoirs of Scott—a work which, with all its faults, is unquestionably the best biography since Boswell's *Life of Johnson.* There is great tenderness in the following letter; and the picture which the writer draws of his happy fireside contrasts painfully with his latter years, when broken health, a desolate hearth, and feelings lacerated by paternal troubles and anxieties, might have made him join in that lamentation of the ancient British bard which he applied to the old age of Thomas Campbell:

> 'God hath provided unpleasant things for me;
> Dead is Morgeneu, dead is Mordav,
> Dead is Morien, dead are those I love.' *

Few letters of Lockhart's are so generally interesting or so valuable, biographically, as the following:

'LONDON, *January* 19, 1837.

'My DEAR LAIDLAW—I received yesterday your letter and a very munificent donation of ptarmigan, for both which accept my best thanks. They were both welcome

* Vide *Quarterly Review*, June 1849.

as remembrancers of Scotland, of old days, and of your kindness and affection, of which last, though I am the worst of correspondents, neither I nor my wife are ever forgetful. The account you give of your situation at present is, considering how the world wags, not unsatisfactory. Would it were possible to find myself placed in something of a similar locality, and with the means of enjoying the country by day and my books at night, without the necessity of dividing most of my time between the labours of the desk—mere drudge-labours mostly—and the harassing turmoil of worldly society, for which I never had much, and now-a-days have rarely indeed any, relish! But my wife and children bind me to the bit, and I am well pleased with the fetters. Walter is now a tall and very handsome boy of near eleven years; Charlotte, a very winsome gipsy of eight—both intelligent in the extreme, and both, notwithstanding all possible spoiling, as simple, natural, and unselfish as if they had been bred on a hillside and in a family of twelve. Sophia is your old friend—fat, fair, and by-and-by to be forty, which I now am, and over, God bless the mark! but though I think I am wiser, at least more sober, neither richer nor more likely to be rich than I was in the days of Chiefswood and Kaeside—after all, *our* best days, I still believe.

'Politics, over which we used sometimes to dispute, I have quite forsworn. I have satisfied myself that the age of Toryism is by for ever; and the business of a party which can in reason propose to itself nothing but a defensive attitude, without hope either of plunder or honour, seems to me to have few claims on those who, when it was in power, never were permitted to share any of the advantages it so lavishly bestowed on fools

and knaves. So I am a very tranquil and indifferent observer.

'Perhaps, however, much of this equanimity as to passing affairs has arisen from the call which has been made on me to live in the past, bestowing for so many months all the time I could command, and all the care I have had really any heart in, upon the manuscript remains of our dear friend. I am glad that Cadell and the few others who have seen what I have done with these are pleased, but I assure you none of them can think more lightly of my own part in the matter than I do myself. My sole object is to do him justice, or rather to let him do himself justice, by so contriving it that he shall be as far as possible, from first to last, his own historiographer; and I have therefore willingly expended the time that would have sufficed for writing a dozen books on what will be no more than the compilation of one. A stern sense of duty—that kind of sense of it which is combined with the feeling of his actual presence in a serene state of elevation above all terrestrial and temporary views—will induce me to touch the few darker points in his life and character as freely as the others which were so predominant; and my chief anxiety on the appearance of the book will be, not to hear what is said by the world, but what is *thought* by you and the few others who can really compare the representation as a whole with the facts of the case. I shall, therefore, desire Cadell to send you the volumes as they are printed, though long before publication, in the confidence that they will be kept sacred, while unpublished, to yourself and your own household; and if you can give me encouragement on seeing the first and second, now I think nearly out of the printer's hands,

it will be very serviceable to me in the completion of the others. I have waived all my own notions as to the manner of publication, &c., in deference to the bookseller,* who is still so largely our creditor, and, I am grieved to add, will probably continue to be so for many years to come.

'Your letters of the closing period I wish you would send to me; and of these I am sure some use, and some good use, may be made, as of those addressed to myself at the same time, which all, however melancholy to compare with those of the better day, have traces of the man. Out of these confused and painful scraps I think I can contrive to put together a picture that will be highly touching of a great mind shattered, but never degraded, and always to the last noble, as his heart continued pure and warm as long as it could beat.—Ever affectionately yours, J. G. LOCKHART.'

We are tempted to add a short extract from another letter of Lockhart's, because it mentions a pleasing

* Mr Cadell. In the autumn of the same year, the enterprising bookseller writes to Laidlaw: 'Strange that all the Ballantynes and Constable are gone, and I am left alone of those behind the curtain during so many critical years! Born at Cockenzie, in East Lothian, educated for business above five years in Glasgow, I came here' [to Edinburgh] 'a raw young man of twenty-one in the winter of 1809–10, and have cuckooed all these men out of their nests, firmly seated in which they all were at that time. And here is Lockhart telling about all of us to posterity. We will all be handed down as appendages to the great man!' Mr Cadell died January 20, 1849, having, it is said, made about £100,000 in business, chiefly by Scott's works. 'Our late illustrious friend used to joke me about a Waverley Cottage or Waverley Hall: I am now rated for a palace!' (Cadell to Laidlaw, July 1834.) Latterly, he was proprietor of the estate of Ratho, near Edinburgh.

incident in the life of the second Sir Walter Scott. He writes, 25th May 1843, that Major Scott and his wife enjoyed perfect health in India, and he adds: 'He (Sir W. S.) tells me that hearing a Highland battalion was to pass about fifty miles off from his station (Bangalore), he rode that distance one day, and back the next, merely to hear the *skirl* of the pipes! No doubt there would be a jolly mess for his reception besides; but I could not but be pleased with the touch of the "auld man."'

LUCY'S FLITTIN'.

'Twas when the wan leaf frae the birk-tree was fa'in,
And Martinmas dowie had wound up the year,
That Lucy row'd up her wee kist wi' her a' in 't,
And left her auld master and neebours sae dear.

For Lucy had serv'd i' the Glen * a' the simmer;
She cam there afore the bloom cam on the pea;†
An orphan was she, an' they had been gude till her;
Sure that was the thing brought the tear to her ee.

She gaed by the stable, where Jamie was stan'in',
Right sair was his kind heart her flittin' to see;
Fare ye weel, Lucy! quo' Jamie, and ran in—
The gatherin' tears trickled fast frae her ee.

As down the burn-side she gaed slow wi' her flittin',
Fare ye weel, Lucy! was ilka bird's sang;

* The Glen is a small mountain valley on the banks of the Quair, about four and a half miles from Innerleithen. A magnificent residence has been built on the estate by the proprietor, Charles Tennant, Esq. Vide description and engraving in Chambers's *History of Peeblesshire.*

† Hogg altered this line as follows:

'She cam there afore the flower bloom'd on the pea.'

She heard the craw sayin 't, high on the tree sittin',
And Robin was chirpin 't the brown leaves amang.

O what is 't that pits my puir heart in a flutter?
And what gars the tears come sae fast to my ee?
If I wasna ettled to be ony better,
Then what gars me wish ony better to be?

I 'm just like a lammie that loses its mither,
Nae mither nor frien' the poor lammie can see;
I fear I hae tint my bit heart a' thegither;
Nae wonder the tear fa's sae fast frae my ee.

Wi' the rest o' my claes, I hae row'd up the ribbon,
The bonnie blue ribbon that Jamie gae me;
Yestreen, when he gae me 't, and saw I was sabbin',
I 'll never forget the wae blink o' his ee.

Though now he said naething but Fare ye weel, Lucy!
It made me I neither could speak, hear, nor see;
He couldna say mair but just Fare ye weel, Lucy!
Yet that I will mind till the day that I dee.

The lamb likes the gowan wi' dew when it 's droukit;
The hare likes the brake and the braird on the lea;
But Lucy likes Jamie;—she turn'd, and she lookit;
She thought the dear place she wad never mair see!'

In publishing the ballad, Hogg added the following verse, in order, as he said, to *complete the story;* but it will be felt, we think, that he has marred the pathetic simplicity of the original, which was complete enough as a picture of the flittin':

'Ah, weel may young Jamie gang dowie and cheerless,
And weel may he greet on the bank o' the burn!
His bonnie sweet Lucy, sae gentle and peerless,
Lies cauld in her grave, and will never return.'

Lockhart has truly characterised Laidlaw's ballad as 'a

simple and pathetic picture of a poor Ettrick maiden's feelings in leaving a service where she had been happy,' and he adds that it has 'long been and must ever be a favourite with all who understand the delicacies of the Scottish dialect, and the manners of the district in which the scene is laid.' A no less flattering or discriminating notice had been previously given by a critic in the *Edinburgh Review*, who, in quoting *one* song from the four volumes of Allan Cunningham's *Songs of Scotland, Ancient and Modern*, selected Laidlaw's 'simple ditty' as a 'fair example of the lowly pathetic' which would 'go to the heart of many a village-bred Scotchman in remote regions and all conditions of society.'

THE END.

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